

African Violet

MAGAZINE

January • February 2014

Volume 67

Number 1



AVSA Information

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FOR ACCURATE SERVICE, SEND YOUR INQUIRIES TO THE CORRECT PERSON. ALWAYS INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS.

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Send check payable to AVSA for new or renewable membership to AVSA Office, 2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702; phone 409-839-4725. Remit in U.S. dollars with draft or check on a USA bank. **See Membership Application.** Master Card/Visa accepted.

MEMBERSHIP AND PROMOTION: Send ideas, offers to help, requests for assistance to Joyce Stork, 2501 E. 23rd St. Fremont, NE 68025. *Email* <kentsflower@gmail.com>.

AFFILIATES: For information on Affiliates or how to organize a chapter, write Mel Grice, 2019 Crosswind Ct., Englewood, OH 45322. *Email* <melsgrice@earthlink.net>.

AVSA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION: Charles Ramser, 2415 Martin St., Wichita Falls, TX 76708. *Email* <charles.ramser@mwso.edu>

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AND COMMERCIAL SALES & EXHIBITS: Lynn Lombard, 790 Ridgecrest Dr., Colfax, CA 95715. For information on convention entries or sales room, contact Lynn Lombard, *Email* <lynn_lombard@worldnet.att.net>

CONVENTION AWARDS: Jan. issue. Send suggestions or contributions for convention awards to Judy Carter, 1825 W. Lincoln St., Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509. *Email* <AVSAawards@windstream.net>.

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LIBRARY: Order AVSA slide programs and packets from AVSA Office 2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702. List in September issue. **Requests must be in writing.** List top 3 choices. **Allow 6 weeks for delivery.** If you have ideas for a library program or slides to donate, write Anne Nicholas, 3113 Deerfield Dr., Denton, TX 76208.

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MVL SUPPLEMENTS: Download from AVSA website, or order from AVSA office for \$1.00. Orders in writing only. Send any correction and/or description of new cultivars with hybridizer's name to: Joe Bruns, 1220 Stratford Lane, Hanover Park, IL 50130.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS: Sent to Associate Members. Renewing members receive card on white protective cover of AVM.

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RESEARCH: Send suggested projects for scientific research or names of interested, qualified, potential research personnel to Dr. Jeff Smith, 3014 W. Amherst Rd., Muncie, IN 47304.

SHOW SCHEDULE APPROVER: For information on Shows, AVSA Awards, and Approving Schedules write to: Meredith Hall, P. O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. *Email* <mhall@reagan.com>. **Do not send Show Schedules by Email - this address is for information ONLY.**

NEW PRICES FOR AVSA ROSETTES, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2012: SSA Packet with no rosettes \$5.00. Orders for rosettes must be specific as to which is needed-standard, species, mini-semi, they may be mixed, color and size all same price. **All rosettes are \$5.00 each added to price of SSA packet.**

AFRICAN VIOLET MAGAZINE INFORMATION

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ARTICLES BY MEMBERS, COLUMNISTS AND MEMORIALS: Send to Editor.

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BOYCE EDENS RESEARCH FUND: Send contributions to Marlene Buck, 17235 N. 106th Ave., Sun City, AZ 85373-1958.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE FUND: Send contributions to Susan Hapner, 35 Ridge Point Dr., Chesterfield, MO 63017.

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On this cover:

Lunar Lily White

Exhibited by: **Diane Miller**

Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By John T. Carter, President

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

As we begin the New Year, we are often tempted to make resolutions such as losing weight and exercising more. Many of us could benefit from doing that, but we know that the majority of us will fail to stick with our resolution very long. I would encourage all of you to make a resolution that you can keep: to attend the AVSA convention in Nashville this coming May.



The new website has been up for the past three months and has been well-received. We have created an online survey to give you an opportunity to give us your feedback in a uniform and consistent manner. You can enter the following information into your browser and complete your survey if you have not already done so.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AVSAwebsite>

I know that many of you are interested in the trips to the Holtkamp Greenhouses, home of the Optimara plants. You will not be able to purchase plants on the tour, but they will be available in the Sales Room later in the week. We have planned four tours in an effort to accommodate the expected interest. There will be a tour morning and afternoon on both Monday and Tuesday, so get your registration in early to improve your chances of getting the time of your choice. You should be able to find the 2014 Convention Information on the website shortly after the first of January. If you do not have Internet access, call our AVSA Office Manager, Amy Carruth, and she will send you a complete packet.

Remember to check the website occasionally for new information about AVSA and events that will be occurring. Information about the 2015 convention will soon be released. Don't forget to submit your local shows and sales to the website and the *African Violet Magazine*. Watch for announcements about new affiliates being formed, or if you plan an organization meeting, let us know so that information can be shared. It can also be posted on the AVSA Facebook page.

It is not long until our spring shows start. I hope that you have your violets started on the "Growing to Show" schedule. This schedule was developed years ago, and is the best guideline we have. Adapt it to your environment and the kinds of plants you grow, to give them their best image for the show.

There was some initial confusion about the Member Login on the website. The login name is simply the word **member**. The password will be the last word of the closing of my column. There will be an overlapping of time on the passwords since it takes several weeks for some of our international members to receive their magazine. For the next two months, the password will be **blooming**.

May your best violets be blooming!

John

Complete a survey on the new AVSA Website. Follow the link below and tell us what you think:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AVM2014>



Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

I have been looking forward to the New Year, and I hope you all have a wonderful 2014. At the AVSA Office, we've enjoyed the holiday wishes from our members, and hope you all enjoyed time with family and friends.

I would like to ask that you please take the time to write and submit an article to this publication. Apparently, the urge to write is seasonal, as I receive the most submissions in the spring and summer months!

As you know, many of the articles that appear in the *African Violet Magazine* originally appear in our affiliated club publications. There are many gifted and interesting writers out there, and I encourage all of you to give writing a try.

Through these many years, I've had members write to share their experiences, and many feel they must let me know up-front that they have never written an article before.

Many successful growers have had experiences that would help "shine a light" on another grower's problem. If you have found a certain method that works for you, or you have knowledge that could help another grower, please share it in an article. After all, aren't we're all in this together?

The cover on the Nov/Dec 2013 AVM was graced by a photo of the lovely plant, 'Jolly Texan.' The plant was grown by a talented newcomer to the national African violet scene, **Ben Haning**, and was hybridized by my dear friend, **Hortense Pittman**. I made a pretty big mistake; somehow running the information about another cover plant from the previous year inside the magazine.



I felt terrible about this and made sure that Ben and Hortense both knew that it was entirely my fault. What nice people they are! Both seemed happy that the plant was on the cover, and understood that I made a mistake. I will be more diligent in the future!

I want to thank my friend, **Neil Lipson**, for coming through with an excellent article when I call him, desperately needing something inter-

esting to fill a couple of very lonely, empty pages! Once again, it's Neil to the rescue! Be sure to read *Temperature Regulation in Growing African Violets* on page 58 in this issue.

On pages 28 and 55, you will find photos of new plants by two Russian hybridizers.

The photos were sent to me by **Dmitry Ozherelyev**, who wrote that he hopes to bring leaves to the AVSA convention in Nashville.

Seating at the Main Convention Meal Functions

I have placed a small notice on other pages in this issue, making reference to a problem that the office staff has dealt with for many years. So many of our convention attendees wait until the "last minute" to register for the convention, and don't realize the burden it puts on the Office Staff. Amy, our Office Manager, will be handling **all** of the Convention Registrations alone. Please make an effort to get yours in early.

Another issue concerns those wanting to sit together at the three main meal functions. **Your registrations must come in the same envelope. No seating assignments will be accepted after the early cut off date. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS.**



Office Update

By Amy Carruth, AVSA Office Manager

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: avsa@earthlink.net

Happy New Year everyone! I hope you all had a happy holiday season. It sure has been cold down here in Texas, and I'm already looking forward to spring. Thank you to everyone for their support during my transition in becoming Office Manager. Please know that I might not always be in the office during business hours to answer the phone, as I have to run errands from time to time. If you would like, leave a message, and I will call you back as soon as I return. You can also email avsa@earthlink.net with any questions, and I will respond right away.

AVSA's 68th consecutive Convention and Show will be held May 25 - June 1, 2014, at the Sheraton Music City Hotel, in Nashville, TN. Holtkamp Greenhouses, Inc. will be hosting this convention with the assistance of the Lone Star African Violet Council and the Mid Atlantic African Violet Society. There will be great tours, including one to the Holtkamp Greenhouses. The convention shows are always beautiful, and there will be plenty of vendors there to help you fill more of your trays at home with violets. It's definitely something you don't want to miss! I look forward to going every year to see and meet all of our wonderful members.

The Convention Registration and Information should be posted on the website soon. If you are unable to print it out from the website, please give me a call at the office (409) 839-4725, and I will



be more than happy to mail you the information. **Please get your convention registration to the office as soon as possible.** With me being the only one handling the convention registrations, I really need your help in getting yours in early. This will certainly make it easier for me to prepare for the convention. **For those of you wanting to sit together at the three main meals, your registrations must come in the same envelope.**

No seating assignments will be accepted after the early cut off date. There will be **NO EXCEPTIONS.** I greatly appreciate your help with this!

Once again, it is very important that your club's information is correct in our records as well as on the AVSA website. I have many people call trying to find a local club nearby, and some of the information we have is outdated. Please help us keep that information correct so we can help those wanting to learn more about growing! You can email any changes to avsa@earthlink.net and melsgrice@earthlink.net.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions at all!

Amy Carruth

AVSA's 68th National Convention

'Violet Pickin' in Tennessee'

Nashville, TN

May 25th - June 1, 2014

For Complete Convention Information

Visit AVSA's Website, www.avsa.org

after January 1, 2014



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Western Sunrise

Exhibited by: Ben Haning

Hybridized by: M. Hall/B. Foster

Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Sport of Amore Elite

Exhibited by:
Alcie Maxwell
Hybridized by:
E. Arkhipov
Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Sweet Affair

Exhibited &
Hybridized by:
Paul Sorano
LL Greenhouses
Standard

In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

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I've had the opportunity over my career to talk with, write, or e-mail with many hybridizers who had questions about breeding African violets. Some have had very sophisticated knowledge of genetics and asked very intricate questions. In these cases, the responses often need a similar level of sophistication, or my answers lack credibility. In other cases, as shown in several of the questions in this column, the questions are more basic. Often, the writer doesn't want or need sophisticated information. They just want to cut to the bottom line on what they can use for their hybridizing projects. Whatever the level of knowledge you use in your hybridizing, I hope that a little bit of knowledge or information will make planning your crosses easier and more productive.



Q: Is the number of seeds produced in a cross dependent on the number of pollen grains that are placed on the stigma during pollination?

A: The number of seeds produced by a cross depends on a number of factors. One important factor is the size of the seed parent plant and its flowers. The ovary of the flower can produce only a certain number of ovules, or potential seeds. The number of ovules is higher in standard plants than it is in miniatures. Thus, standards tend to produce seed pods with higher numbers of seeds than do miniatures. Trailers also tend to run to smaller flowers and have a decreased ovule number. Therefore, trailers tend to produce fewer seeds in each seed pod.

Next, each ovule must be pollinated by a separate pollen grain from the pollen deposited on the stigma. If there are 300 ovules in the ovary, there must be a minimum of 300 different pollen grains on the stigma to pollinate and fertilize each ovule. Generally, getting enough pollen on a stigma is not a problem. If the stigma is receptive, pollen will stick readily and be available to fertilize each ovule.

The only time that pollen might be limited is if the anther or pollen sac is reduced in size or pollen count, as sometimes happens in double flowers or semi-double flowers. If you are concerned about enough pollen being available, try to dust the stigma with the pollen from several flowers from the pollen parent. This should insure that enough pollen is available to fertilize all of the available ovules.

It is not unusual to find aborted seeds as well as mature seeds inside a seed pod. Whether this reflects a failure of enough pollen to fertilize each ovule is uncertain. Other factors could have caused an ovule to abort, such as lethal genetic condition in the developing embryo. Mature seeds will be black and shiny in coloration. Aborted ovules tend to be gray and dull in coloration. This difference in color is often obvious when the contents of a seed pod are spread on a white sheet of paper. Another difference is that when the paper is tilted, viable seeds tend to "roll" on the paper while aborted ovules tend to "scoot." Generally, it isn't worthwhile to try to separate the mature seeds from the aborted ones. Plant both and expect only the mature seeds to germinate.

Q: Will crossing two variegated plants together, or "selfing" a variegated plant, increase the amount of variegation in the offspring?

A: Tommie Lou and crown variegation inherit only through the seed parent. If the seed parent has minimal variegation, the offspring will show similar minimal amounts of variegation. The best way to improve the variegation in the offspring is to use a seed parent with strong variegation. Selfing a variegated plant (using the same parent as both seed and pollen parent) gives the same results. There is no evidence to support an additive effect of variegation from the pollen parent.

Having said this, there is some range in the variegation of the offspring due to the random as-

sortiment of normal and mutated chloroplasts in the ovules of the seed parent. Some ovules will have fewer mutated chloroplasts than the seed parent, resulting in less variegation. Some ovules will have more mutated chloroplasts, resulting in stronger variegation. It is this change in ratio of normal to mutated chloroplasts that sometimes gives the appearance of increased variegation being inherited from the pollen parent.

Q: Is flower size dominant or recessive?

A: Flower size is probably not a single gene in African violets, but instead reflects the interaction of several genes. However, if you need to think of flower size as a simple dominant recessive, I'd try a model with small flowers as the dominant trait and large flowers as the recessive trait. This model won't be perfect, but it should serve for most cases.

Q: Is plant size dominant or recessive?

A: Plant size is also not a simple dominant or a recessive trait. However, if you work with large size as the dominant trait and smaller size as the

recessive trait, you could breed for the desired plant size most of the time. Just remember that plant size is an additive or dose related trait. Each dose of the dominant for "large" will result in a large plant. Each dose of the recessive for "small" will result in a smaller plant. The more dominants you combine together, the larger the plant will be. The more recessives that are combined together, the smaller the plant will be. Therefore, breeding large X large will give you large offspring. Breeding small X small will give you small offspring. You'll probably get a few exceptions, but this model should work fairly well most of the time.

Q: Is dropping blooms a dominant or a recessive trait?

A: Treat dropping blooms as a genetic dominant. If the plant has dropping flowers, this trait will usually be passed on to about half the offspring. Dropping flowers is usually considered an undesirable trait and should be avoided in genetic crosses.

AVSA SCHOLARSHIP

Charles Ramser, AVSA Scholarship Committee

For almost fifteen years, The African Violet Society of America (AVSA) has offered a college scholarship program for students—undergraduate and graduate—who are studying ornamental horticulture, floriculture, plant genetics, botany, or an equivalent program in an accredited college or university. The award is funded through annual investment income from the Boyce Edens Research Fund. Dependent upon funds available from financial market activity at the time, one or possibly two students are selected annually. The award is generally offered for one academic year—two long semesters—at a time. Awardees may apply in successive years but will be in competition with new applicants.

Prior to application, students must have completed a minimum of 24 semester or quarter hour credits, while maintaining at least a "B" average. Awards are based upon "merit."

The application form is available on line at www.avsa.org or from student request through the AVSA office. The completed form shall be submitted, along with an official transcript and two professor recommendations, to the Scholarship Selection Committee by March 1, for the following academic school year.

AVSA remains dedicated to the recognition and advancement of horticultural and related study at the college level.



The Growing and Transportation of a Large Show Plant

Article and Photos by Paul Lee

At our convention, I was asked how I managed to get such a large plant to the show. This is an explanation of what I did to grow my plant *Sinningia* 'Flamenco Apricot Bouquet', and to transport it.



Paul's Plant

The dormant tuber was stored for the winter in the basement, under a table, so it was the coolest location I could find. In March I noticed 4cm (1.5") of growth coming from the tuber. I left it in the same position, still in low light.



Boxes are good.

In the beginning of April, I heated a small area of a greenhouse to grow a few annuals and vegetable plants for transplanting outside later. Having a heated sunny area, I then moved my *Sinningia* out into the greenhouse, where I placed it in a shady area so it could acclimatize to the brighter

conditions. The only fertilization I had done at this point was a generous helping of compost applied in March.

Now that it was in the brighter light, I used fish emulsion and a little liquid seaweed as fertilizer. I also sprayed it with potassium silicate several times. This is to prevent powdery mildew, and it is an essential mineral to strengthen the cell walls of all plants. This makes the plant stronger and more robust, allowing it to be transported with less damage. The spraying of this material does not leave any marks on the leaves as far as I could see, and spraying the silicon is the most effective application method.



Plant ready.

By May the plant was still in an oval pot that was becoming round because of the large tuber. I moved it to a 30cm (1') pot using a Pro-mix soil-less mix plus compost and ground stone dust in the proportion of 3:1:1/8. I continued feeding two or three times with fish emulsion.

Transporting a large plant can be a logistical nightmare, especially in a small car. I started by finding a cardboard box big enough to hold the pot, but not too large to allow it to slide around. I then lined the box with a large plastic bag as shown in the picture. I put the plant pot in the box

and pulled the plastic bag up around the plant part way, which allowed the plant to be supported around the lower area. I then put the plant in the front seat using a towel at the back of the box to keep the box as level as possible. The car was already totally filled with boxes of "goody bags" for the convention. This did not allow me to adjust the seat to accommodate the plant box. The plastic bag prevented the leaves from rubbing on the seat material and damaging them, but the tips of the stems were so long that they touched the windshield. They actually bent, but once I got the plant to our hotel room, the stems straightened up, as every one could see at the show. Coming home, the plant did not get the same pampering. I had a lot more room in the car.



Plant in car.

From the Toronto Gesneriad Society *Newsletter*



Everdina

Exhibited by:

Anne Brown

Hybridized by:

H. Inpijn/R. Nedeau

Miniature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Regional Preferences: Fact or Fiction?

By Paul Kroll

Over many years of growing, exhibiting, and judging African violets and gesneriads, I have been fortunate to travel the United States and Canada. Attending conventions, shows, and club meetings has provided me with a broad experience in observations of local "practices." It is imperative that those who read this article realize and know that I mean no malice at all. I purposely refrain from using names of clubs, shows, people, etc. because I do not wish to throw stones. I am merely talking about my observances and by doing so, hope to point out where we might be a bit more open minded in our approaches to what, and how, we exhibit and judge.

Most of my examples will involve *perception from the judging viewpoint*. Once we become an experienced judge, we have difficulty thinking from another perspective. Bill Foster, Chairman of the Shows and Judges Committee, instructs judges to use the point-scoring system to their advantage, making certain the points deducted are reflected in the written comments. This takes creative thinking and a great deal of it! We all have personal preferences, and each area or locale seems to have its preferences and habits well established.

Nowhere in the AVSA HANDBOOK does it say the words "like" or "dislike." Although we all occasionally say that (Careful! Bill will fine you 50 cents each time you say it!), we must document our thinking rather than merely speaking those words, as the words themselves mean nothing in the actual judging process.

Designers, on the other hand, after many years of subjecting themselves and their creations to the whims of judges, will often take great solace in the compliment of a fellow designer whose work they respect. In this case it does not matter to that designer/exhibitor whether or not the design wins a ribbon.

Comments can be misleading, especially those that are used too often. This can be a local habit as

well. I see the comment "less is more" written on design entry cards. While this comment may be appropriate, a few more words would make it much more meaningful to the exhibitor. Do not allow yourself to overuse a favorite comment. (This might be a topic for another article!)

Container gardens seem to be the most regionalized in their creation and the resultant judging preferences. I have seen enormous dish gardens, natural gardens, and terrariums that would take the proverbial "three men and a boy to carry." Why make such large exhibits? Why award such gargantuan exhibits? Is the challenge not to create a small chunk of nature? Try it; you might like it! *Whether or not the judges like it may depend entirely upon what they are used to seeing.* This is the point of this article.

As judges, we need to look for different exhibits and realize the work that went into producing them. Exhibits that are different from the norm in any area might be exactly what is needed to open the door to new, creative thinking. Why does basically the same execution of an underwater arrangement win time after time? Try something different! Just because every exhibitor in your local area uses marbles at the bottom of the container does not mean that you need to do the same. Think about it.

A design within a niche needs to have an "anchor" somewhere to support it. Does that anchor have to be on the "floor" of the niche? Why can it not be on the back or the side, if the execution of the class title warrants that? Different styles of designing can, and should, be rewarded, providing we can judge them with our current scale of points. There are so many styles of designs that are appealing, but if they cannot be judged using the scale of points we have in our HANDBOOK, then those can be entered "for exhibit only" and enjoyed by all those coming through the show room.

A horticultural local preference came to my at-

tention recently. A standard trailer was awarded a red ribbon. The comments read, "Many spent blossoms. So many crowns makes the exhibit appear that there are more than one plant in the pot." The red ribbon didn't matter; that was not what caught my attention. The second sentence, however, did not make sense to me until I inquired of the judges about their thoughts. I was told that in *this state they like to see distinct crowns, all separated from one another rather than a large mass of leaves*. This local preference does not make sense to me at all. The more crowns the better, and it was one single plant in the pot; I can testify to that. We need to be very careful of our perception of form in

trailers. Form does not always mean "round." It can be oval, triangular, etc. This I learned at several AVSA conventions attending seminars on trailers.

My purpose in writing this article is to bring a few examples to the attention of exhibitors and judges. Local preferences do not necessarily govern what we like or dislike and certainly should not override the AVSA HANDBOOK. I respectfully suggest that we all open our minds and think about what is really deserving of an award. Always remember that we are instructed to look for beauty, not flaws. *This is especially true when flaws are based on local preferences.*

"And the winners are ..." 434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

By Mary J. Corondan

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

METROPOLITAN ST. LOUIS AVS, MO, - Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Picasso, Natchurly Nawlins, Rhapsodie Rebecca; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Winnergreen, Irish Flirt, Rob's Silver Spook; Design Sweepstakes, **Fran Russom**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Ontario, Rhapsodie Juliana, Rhapsodie Rebecca, **Martha Nix**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Persian Prince, Ness' Angel Blush, Jolly Orchid; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Ness' Angel Blush, **Susan Hapner**. Best AVSA Species Collection: Saintpaulia 5cl clone tongwensis, Saintpaulia 5b clone grotei Mather No. 21, Saintpaulia 8 clone rupicola; Best Species: Saintpaulia 5cl clone tongwensis; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Gary Dunlap**. 2nd Best Species Collection: Saintpaulia 8 clone Cha Simba, Saintpaulia 8 clone rupicola, Saintpaulia 5b clone grotei, **Pat Dunlap**. Best Standard: Ronn's Starry, **Ronn Nadeau**. Best Semiminiature: Snow Leopard; Best Trailer: Jersey Girl Trail, **Ron Masa**. Best Gesneriad: Kohleria 'Snakeskin', **Bonnie Russom**. Best Design, **Kathleen Dickman**.

OHIO STATE AVS, OH - Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Delightful, Buckeye Cherry Topping, Buckeye Too Much; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Rinky Dink, Rob's Love Bite, Jolly Orchid; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Cherry Topping; Best



Semiminiature: Jolly Sizzle; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Debbie McInnis**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Mischief, Rob's Pink Buttercups, Jolly Frills, **Pat Berilla**. Best Species Collection: Saintpaulia 5cl ionantha subsp. ionantha var. ionantha, Saintpaulia 8 clone Cha Simba, Saintpaulia 8 clone Kacharoroni; Best Species: Saintpaulia ionantha subsp. ionantha var. ionantha, **Nancy Carr**. Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Cathy Willis**. Best Gesneriad: Aeschynanthus lobbianus 'Variegated', **Ralph Robinson**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Mel Grice**.

OTTAWA AVS, ONTARIO - Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Mardi Gras Madness, Frozen in Time, Blue Dragon; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Cool Fruit, Rob's Zipper Zapper, Plumberry Glow; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Plumberry Glow; Best Standard: Blue Dragon; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Species: Saintpaulia 5c1 clone ionantha; Best Gesneriad: Sinningia cardinalis 'Innocent'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Eileen McGrath**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Green Dragon, Ness' Satin Rose, Thunder Surprise, **Lorna Russell**. Best Trailer: Rob's Sailor Bill, **Madeline Kalinowski**. Best Design, **Ivy Sayers**. Design Sweepstakes, **Sandy Black**.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Mac's Misty Meadow

Exhibited by: Anne Brown

Hybridized by: G. McDonald

Miniature

A Family Portrait

By Georgene Albrecht

101 Oak Heights Drive • Oakdale, PA 15071

Email: georgena@verizon.net

Streptocarpus 'Purple Panda'

This perky *Streptocarpus* (strep-toe-CAR-pus) bloom is adorable. When blooms open, they look up and turn downward as they age. My plant came from Rob's Violet Barn, but it must not be his hybrid because 'Bristol's' does not precede the name. Not only is each flower stem floriferous, but, there are many flower stems on the base of every midrib.

The never-ending array of new strep hybrids is amazing. I just realized that I seem to have more of them than any other gesneriad. If repotted often, have good light, and are watered regularly, they will bloom constantly.

Streptocarpus 'Saturn'

My streps tend to bloom most of the time because they are repotted often in four-inch pots, using my modified Cornell soil mix. Always remove the older leaves that have finished blooming. If bottom leaves turn yellow, it is a sure sign they do not have the proper nutrition. Repot them.

You may notice that the top of the soil is covered with a thin layer of sphagnum. The roots



are usually just under the soil surface so the moss tends to neutralize the salt build-up. This salt build-up will kill both roots and new growth.

Karyn Cichocki recommend using Miracle Gro Tomato Fertilizer, and the flowers are much larger. The formula is 18-18-21 and I use 1/4 teaspoon to a gallon of water, which is alternated with Jack's Classic African Violet Fertilizer. This is mixed at 1/4 teaspoon to a gallon. The formula is 12-36-14 with micronutrients.

My modified Cornell soil mix also contains bone meal and dried blood. However, growers tell me it takes so long to break down that it is useless. Maybe, but I have never had a better mix. *Streps* and *episcias* do not like a lot of fertilizer. Remember to avoid fertilizing a dry root ball.

Propagation is easy. When repotting, the tip of a healthy leaf is severed and placed in vermiculite. This is to insure keeping the variety in case the main plant is lost. Cover lightly and make sure there is no moisture on the foliage. One grower simply cuts the entire leaf off at the midrib and inserts it in water or soil to root. Roots form best in springtime.

Before you insert the midrib in water, peel or remove the foliage. Unless you want seed capsules to mature, remove them before they take strength from the plant. Lately, I have seen photos of seed pods emerging from the flower. This happened a lot when I had thrips, and they pollinated the bloom. Speaking of thrips, we had no thrips out doors this entire summer. It was wonderful not having to spray inside.



The Trials and Tribulations of the New Grower

Reduce the Variables and Improve Consistency

One of the most difficult challenges for new growers is when they receive conflicting information on how to grow African violets. What this article aims to do is simplify what the grower should do and what areas to avoid during this learning period. The main point of this article is to reduce the number of variables to improve your odds of growing healthy plants. Consistency is the key to optimal growing.

There is quite a bit of conflicting advice for growers who are just starting out. This includes what soil to use, what kind of lighting, which fertilizer and how much, and what water treatments, if any, to implement. In addition, leaf propagation and insect control are often not fully understood. I will tackle these subjects one by one to make it easier for the new grower, and allow them to enjoy their violets faster and with less chance of losing them to insects and other problems.

First, let's address soil. The standard soil mix that many growers use is one-third peat moss, one-third perlite, and one-third vermiculite. Many growers such as I also add one part of high quality soil, like Baccto soil, so it is a four-part mixture. Now here is the key with soils: Pick the four parts, and **STICK WITH IT!** Don't keep changing one, then another, and then another; as each time you do this you throw a monkey wrench into your growing. I use Miracle Gro for three parts, plus regular Baccto (not the Lite) soil for the fourth. Miracle Gro never changes their formulations, and neither does Baccto. If you hear that this soil or that has been "improved," **WATCH OUT!** Every change they make complicates your life.

Now, adjust the pH of the mixture with some granular dolomite lime to bring the pH to about 7.0. If you start at 7.0, then the peat moss, which will degrade, will bring it down a small amount to



closer to 6.5. I use three teaspoons of dolomite granules per 100 fluid ounces of soil. I do not recommend using pH strips, as the meters are more accurate and sell for as little as \$13.

Periodically, I see posts on the African violet sites about sterilizing the soil. In my decades of growing these plants, I have never found a need to do so, and neither have many of my knowledgeable friends. In fact, Baccto soil has beneficial microbes, and sterilizing will kill them, and so will the chloramines in your water. In the old days growers were afraid of nematodes and other detrimental insects. Those days are gone. All good quality soil mixes are clean, and you just don't have these problems today. I would let the separate components sit unused for a couple months to allow fungus gnats to die off, just in case. You do not have to worry about perlite or vermiculite having bugs.

You should repot your plants every six months or less, as the soil will become more acidic from the sphagnum breaking down and will be less "potent" because of accumulation of fertilizer salts. This will be made obvious when you see an orange crust around the edge of the soil. Because I use inexpensive plastic pots, I simply throw them away when I see this crust, as it is not worth the effort for me to scrub them down and clean them.

The size of the pot can make a big difference in the growth of the plant. For example, I have seen many growers try to save themselves some time by jumping to a much larger pot to eliminate potting later. Don't do it! First, you are allowing the plants to send all their energy to the roots instead of the plant growth and, second, you are allowing fertilizer to accumulate in the soil with no advantage.

The second area of concern is how to water your plants. While many experienced growers will mat or wick water, I recommend that the new

grower top water, especially if you only have a few plants. When you do so, you should add water, then pour off the excess, and not let the pots sit in the water. Why top watering? First of all, when you start off, you don't have many plants, so why mat or wick water with so few violets? Also, when you mat water, all of your calculations for fertilizer and insect control will change. The reduction will depend on how dry the air is in your growing area, how light or heavy the soil is, and how much light and heat the plants are subjected to at your home. This will cause these growers to over-fertilize, over-treat for insects, and can also lead to excessive watering, which contributes to root rot if the soil is not light enough.

One issue with water is that many people think the water that you drink is perfect for plants. Not necessarily. I would never drink rainwater or distilled water, which is great for plants. And I would be very cautious about using well water on plants, but not be hesitant to drink it. With rain or distilled water, you can also add micronutrients, but if you use tap water, you must have the water checked, and removing chlorine and chloramines is essential.

Well water can be very high in total dissolved solids, called TDS, and frequently has an extremely high pH. Some growers who use rainwater from off their roof have had a very acidic pH problem. Personally, I have had good luck with the rainwater from my roof, which tests 7.0 with no TDS. You really should have it checked out, and many home improvement stores have free test kits for you to do this. When in doubt, buy distilled water and use that at the beginning until you get a handle on how your tap water or your rainwater measures up. Add one or two drops of TAP Water Conditioner by API, available at pet stores, to each gallon of tap water to clear chlorine and chloramines.

Lighting is another important area. I recommend to nearly all growers, except the professional greenhouses, to use a 2-lamp F40T12 or F35T8 fixture with the height about 10 inches above the tops of the plants for standard African violets. The T8 lamps may soon be available in different grow lamps, but as of this writing, you can only buy Gro-lux in T12 lamps. Minis and semi-minis will need slightly different lighting, but too often I have seen light fixtures that are way too high, sometimes 16-18 inches away from the plants! This will cut the light to half of what it should be, and the

plants will not bloom as much, if at all. I recommend one warm light and one cool white, and to please stick with a 4-foot fixture if possible. Home improvement stores carry them. Different size fixtures do not put out the same lumens and will change your requirements.

Also, some growers will inadvertently place some of their plants too close to the lamps. What many growers don't know is that the light in the middle of the fixture can be 50% higher than at the corners. Experienced growers will place certain plants in certain parts of the trays to take this into account. The dark colored leaf plants go in the middle, and light or variegated plants go along the edges. Also, new lamps will be brighter, as much as 15-20%, compared to older lamps.

Many beginners will grow their violets in windows without knowing how much actual light the plants are getting, and whether the exposure is too much or too little. In the southern states in the US, you can accidentally give your plants too much light if you pick a southern window during the summer. The same applies if you pick a northern window during the winter in the northern states. It is not cut and dry, let me tell you.

Growers will treat their plants with chemicals, but not know that the treatments may contain fertilizer, throwing off the fertilizer calculations. For example, Bayer Tree and Shrub has fertilizer, but Bonide Tree and Shrub does not. I use Bonide for my Imidacloprid watering when needed. Many growers will hear that some of the perlite on the market contains fertilizer, but they never read the package to learn that it's an infinitesimal amount, making no difference at all to the plants' requirements. One good example of this is Miracle Grow Perlite, which contains 1/500th of the amount of fertilizer that you would need for your plants. They're required by law to put this on the label, but for no other reason.

Probably one of the most serious problems that beginners face is bringing insects into their collection. One of the most important articles that I wrote was called "Back from the show? Isolate and Spray," (AVM issue July/August '12, pg. 27). Too often, the grower will isolate, but have no idea what to look for on the plants or how to recognize insect damage.

Fertilizers are another area of concern for new growers. The standard amount of fertilizer for most African violets is between 1/8 and 1/4 tsp. per gal-

lon of water. You water the plants with this dilute fertilizer solution. However, many of these growers will do a "heaping" amount of 1/4 tsp. that is closer to 1/2 tsp. Then they wonder why they have tight centers and distorted plants. Both Optimara and Plant Marvel fertilizers have no urea, which is best to avoid, and also have micro-nutrients which benefit the plants

Summary and Important Points for Beginners

Use distilled water until you do a water analysis of your tap water or rain.

Buy a non-urea fertilizer such as Optimara or Plant Marvel 14-12-14 with micronutrients.

Stick with the three or four part soil mix, and use granular dolomite lime to adjust the pH.

Purchase a 2-lamp, F40T12 fixture or F55T8 fixture, and keep the lamps 10 in. from the tops of your plants. Avoid T-5 lamps unless you are experienced.

Isolate and spray all new plants coming into the collection.

Recently I placed a survey on a number of African violet websites, since it has been a few decades ago that I was a beginner. The survey asked what the biggest mistakes were for new growers and, in order of severity, I was told the following:

- overwatering

- poor lighting, either too much or too little

- pots were too big

- incorrect temperature, either too high or too low

The beginner should "grow" into violets, rather than diving in. I see too many new growers buy-

ing everything in sight, getting plants from everyone and not isolating, and making one mistake after another. Then frequently they lose the entire collection all at once, and they're devastated.

Let your hobby knowledge build up, and try to read as many issues of AVM as possible to learn what you need to know. It's a wonderful hobby and by far cheaper than most others. Join a club or visit the Internet sites on violets, as there are dozens of them and the numbers are growing fast. The joy will never end. It hasn't for me after almost 50 years.

Try specializing in a particular favorite, as I have done with chimeras. I am still learning, and I have to correct myself periodically in some of my writings. With knowledge and success, you may become "mad about violets" as many of us are.

I would like to thank Jeannie Myers for her help in editing this article. Her assistance for the past year in proofing my writings has been invaluable to me.

Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant and vice-president of the African Violet Society of Springfield. He can be reached by emailing him at ndlipson@gmail.com or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. He will return your call.

Foliar Feeding Baby Plantlets

By Nancy Manozzi

When baby plantlets have been separated from the mother leaf, they don't always have a very well-developed root system. Newly planted leaves don't get roots for several weeks so you might want to try foliar feeding.

If plants can't get fertilizer through the roots, they may be able to absorb it through their leaves. In fact, a study says the plant takes up 98% of the fertilizer sprayed on leaves while the roots take up much less.

Mix the fertilizer the same as for watering your plants, 1/8 or 1/4 teaspoon fertilizer to 1 gallon warm water. Pour into a spray bottle. For this

solution, you should use hot water because when spraying it, you'll find that it sprays quite cooler than the real temperature because of the air.

Spray generously, but not so much that the water drips off the leaves. It is safe to spray in the center, just try not to let the water accumulate there. If it does, blot with a tissue or soft paper towel.

Remember, *never try a new method on your entire collection!*

From *Ye Bay Stater*,
Publication of the Bay State AVS

AVSA BOOSTER FUND

Shirley Berger, Chairman

September 1 – October 31, 2013 - TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS; \$685.00



Geneva

Trudy Brekel, Brighton, CO
Ohio State African Violet Society



Multicolor

Jeri Anderson, Tucson, AZ
Winston J. Goretsky, Calgary, Canada
Garden State African Violet Club, Mercer
County, NJ
In lieu of judge's fees for Linda LoPresti
and Susan E. Arnao
Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society
In lieu of speaker's fee for Sandy Skalski



Two-tone

Shirley Berger, Avon Park, FL
In memory of dear friend Marjorie
Clink
Nonna Holden, Sebring, FL
Pam Stark, Jackson, MI



Thumbprint

Cindy Bauer, Middleton, WI
Kathy Bell, Tucson, AZ
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In lieu of judging expenses for Sue
Hanna (for website needs), Bob Kurzinski,
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Barbara Lagerway, El Cerrito, CA
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Connie Resseguie, Bakersfield, CA
Sandra Skalski, Mullica Hill, NJ
South Coast African Violet Society, CA
In memory of Charlotte Rosengrank
Vivian Stahl, Gaithersburg, MD and Helen
Stahl, Durham, NC
In memory of Gertrude Pearl, "who loved
African Violets"
Pam West, Irving, TX

A Special Note: Holtkamp Greenhouses, our 2014 host, is sponsoring a design award for the Nashville show. This design will use an Optimara NeverFloris plant and the Best in Class award will be \$100. Designers, be sure and check the design schedule as posted in January, 2014, and plan on entering this special class.

AVSA 2014 Convention Souvenir Book Ads

This year's convention is in Nashville, TN., May 25 – June 1, 2014. The theme is "Violet Pickin' in Tennessee.

Ads can be well wishes or advertising and help defray costs. Ads are an excellent way to promote your organization.

The maximum size of the full page ad is 8" high x 5" wide: half page, 4" h x 5"w; quarter page, 2"h x 5"w. Prices for ads are the same as in 2013. The rates for these ads are: Quarter Page, \$30, USD; Half Page, \$50, USD; Full Page, \$90, USD. All inside ads will be run in black and white. We also have three full page spaces on the inside front, inside back and outside

back cover at \$125, USD, per page printed in black and white or \$150, USD, printed in color (cover pages only).

To purchase an ad, please reply by mail to Gary and Rhona Thurman, Souvenir Booklet Chairpersons, 1818 Lake Quitman Drive, Richmond, TX 77406 or email at thurmconsul@earthlink.net. The deadline for all ads is April 14, 2014. Camera ready copy is preferred (pdf or Word doc or docx file).

Checks or money orders in USD should be made payable to AVSA 2014 Convention account and be included with your ad. If the ad is sent by email, please send the check to us at the address above.

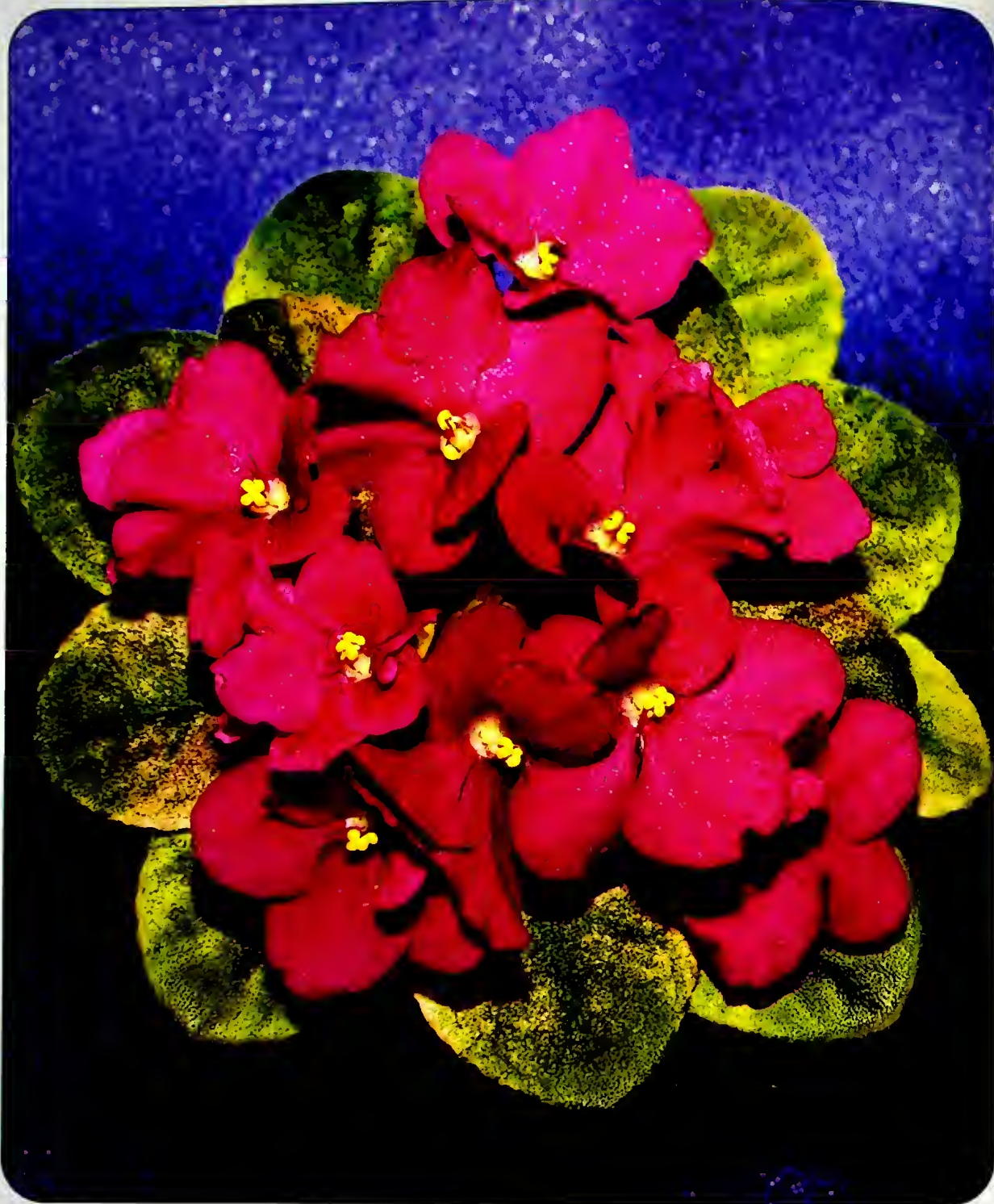


Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Slap Happy

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnes

Hybridized by: R. Robinson

Semi-miniature



Jolly Disco

Exhibited by:

Kathy Lahti

Hybridized by:

H. Pittmann

Miniature

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Episcia 'Ronnie'

Exhibited by:

Jane Rexilius



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Leo Lee – LOHAS Park, Hong Kong
'Blue Umbrella' (10618)

09/09/2013 (L. Lee) Single blue reverse bell. Dark green, quilted, serrated/red back. **Semiminiature trailer**

'Colourful Butterfly' (10619)
09/09/2013 (L. Lee) Single chimera pink wasp/white stripe, yellow streaks. Light green, wavy. **Standard**

'Hiding Face' (10620) 09/09/2013 (L. Lee)
Single-semidouble light pink wasp. Medium green, plain/bustle back. **Standard**

'Lucky Ferris Wheel' (10621) 09/09/2013 (L. Lee)
Single-semidouble chimera pink star/white stripe, yellow blush. Medium green, heart-shaped, quilted, serrated. **Semiminiature**

'Mr. Tai Hung' (10622) 09/09/2013 (L. Lee)
Double chimera rose-mauve star/white stripe,



frilled green edge. **Variegated** medium green and white, glossy, ruffled. **Standard**

'Solar Corona' (10623) 09/09/2013 (L. Lee) Single white bell/blue edge. Medium green, plain, glossy. **Standard**

Lynn Canning – Overland Park, KS
'LC's Raspberry Shout' (10624)
10/01/2013 (L. Canning) Single chimera white sticktite pansy/dark raspberry stripe, darker eye. Medium green, quilted, scalloped. **Standard**

REGISTRATION CHANGE

The following have been changed by the hybridizers:

'Maddie's Magical Smile' (10597) Change name to 'Maddy's Magical Smile'.

'Allegro Epicenter' (10608) Change from miniature to semiminiature.



BOYCE EDENS RESEARCH FUND

Marlene J. Buck • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958

Donations received from: August 1, 2013 – September 30, 2013

Total = \$ 199.00

Multicolor



Garden State African Violet Club, Mercer County, NJ

In lieu of fees from our 2013 show from Marianne Gershon and Jan Murasko
San Mateo County African Violet Society, Redwood City, CA



Two-Tone

Susan Smith, Scarborough, ON, Canada

Thumbprint



Sharon Boyd, Saint John, NB, Canada

Kris Johnson, Bellingham, WA

Cathy O'Rear, Hazel Green, AL

Linda Springer, Rochester, NY

Caroline Storey, San Marcos, TX

Neville W Ward, Great Falls, VA

Pam West, Irving, TX

We Have Heard You!

John Carter, AVSA President

'Thank you' to those who participated in our technology survey. You can be sure that the information and your comments were read. We replied to some of you who left a working email address. I compiled a summary of the results, and it is posted on the website so that everyone can see the type of responses we received. It was not practical to post all of the comments, but the following is my list of the top issues that were presented in the survey.

Photos of the violets must be on the website and available to everyone.

First Class is wanted in a format for Mac computers.

The *African Violet Magazine* is wanted in electronic format.

Back Issues of the *African Violet Magazine* are wanted in electronic format.

More magazine articles are wanted on the website.

The Judges Handbook is wanted in electronic format.

Members are looking for local clubs.

This is not complete by any means, but these are the ones that were repeated in some format most often. The first one has been implemented. It will be an ongoing process of adding photos, but they are there.

I have been encouraged from some of the discussions that have taken place in the social media

area. There are a number of younger members who are discovering the joy of growing African violets. They are sharing growing tips and experiences with one another. They, as I, would like to see us get more of our publications into an electronic format. I have asked the Publications Committee to see what can be done. I will also be doing some of my own investigations to help the Committee. Don't be alarmed if you are of the paper persuasion. It will continue to be there for you.

We are seeing a significant culture change in how we communicate, seek information and entertainment. We have seen major bookstores close, in part for failure to recognize the move to electronic publications. We are seeing the video stores closing due in part to the ability to view or download video entertainment through the Internet or online processes. The public is expecting electronic resources from any organization from which they seek information. That includes the African Violet Society of America.

We have heard you. Please keep in mind we are a small not-for-profit organization dependent upon volunteers for a lot of help. Do you have special skills in this area? Would you like to help? Please send me a note with the type of skills you have and an estimate of the amount of time you can donate and I will try to match you up with a committee that you can help. Send your note to president@avsa.org.

Vintage Violets

By Barbara Elkin

2855 Gayle Lane • Auburn, CA 95620-9674

AVSA's Most Wanted

Bryte Pixie, Happy Harold, Happy Prince, Laswell's Girl Friday, Optimara Phoenix, Skagit Rainbow Trail, Skagit Tiny Tim, Wee Dreamer, Wisteria.

A Beginner's Journey with 'Rob's Love Bite'

by Jeannie M. Myers

Back in the early 1970s, along with my bearded, hippy husband and two young children, we were living a "simple lifestyle" and hubby and I each worked part-time. Besides wearing my legal secretary hat for fifteen hours each week, I was into baking our own bread, canning apricots and tomatoes, growing a lot of our own food, and studying pop psychology and Eastern religions. I loved green houseplants and had collected around seventy of them, mostly from friends who owned a nursery, but some from grocery stores, and wherever I could find them at a reasonable price. I wasn't much drawn to the flowering varieties, which I considered "too gaudy," so I grew palms, snake plants, scheffleras, asparagus ferns, Boston ferns, spider plants, dracaena, and others.

Fast forward to 2010. A dear friend of mine passed away, and I wound up inheriting her beautiful wrought-iron plant stand with eight African violets, most of which had never been repotted and had multiple crowns with extremely long necks.

My first question was "What the heck do I do with these?" I recalled my grandmother growing them, but I had always thought of African violets as little old lady plants. Over the next couple of years, I learned through trial and error that they need good light in addition to consistent watering and fertilizing. I found that the large ceramic self-watering pots worked well, and the plants bloomed frequently. Paul Sorano of Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses and Martha Stewart (on her 2/7/12 show) taught me how to separate African violets that had grown multiple crowns and how to repot ones with long necks. I was on my way!

It didn't take long before I began to yearn for more exotic African violets than those I was seeing in the grocery stores. I bought a couple of colorful plants at a discount store, bringing my collection to ten. I joined African Violet Nerds on Facebook. I learned about the gorgeous varieties at Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses and The Violet Barn. Oh, wow, this was getting exciting! So I ordered seven more varieties, one of them being my very first mini, 'Rob's Love Bite.' Right away I decided to order four

more of the 3-1/2 inch ceramic self-watering pots, so they'd get here about the same time my new plants arrived.

Here's where my limited knowledge about African violets became problematic. First of all, I knew nothing yet about the plant/pot size rule (pot should be 1/3 the size of the leaf spread). Second, I had no idea I'd need to grow a mini any differently than a standard.

On May 11, 2012, when the box with 'Rob's Love Bite' (and three other standards) arrived, I fell in love! What a gorgeous, tiny, sweet thing it was! Right away I planted it into its new 3-1/2 in. ceramic self-watering pot. I filled the reservoir with fertilized water, and placed my new mini treasure at the top of the plant stand, secure in the expectation that it would thrive while I was gone on a week-long trip. (Photo 1, 5/11/12)



Photo 1, 5/11/12

Shortly after I returned from my trip, I began to realize something was wrong with Rob's Love Bite. Some of the leaves fell off. The crown itself was looking brown and had stopped growing. I had no experience to draw from with over-watered African violets, and I had never before seen crown rot. I was mystified! (Photo 2, 6/5/12)



Photo 2, 6/5/12

In desperation, I logged onto Facebook and posted my plight in African Violet Nerds, along with a photo. One of the first responses came from a man named Neil, whose

profile photo was this hot yellow car. In his typically direct, concise fashion he wrote: "Way over potted, too wet, has crown rot. Take it out of the pot, save leaves because you might not be able to save it. Remove the soil and all rot. Let the plant lay on dry paper towels for 24 hours. Then repot in a very small pot, and don't water it for several days." A few other Nerds agreed with him.

I was in disbelief, even denial! 'Rob's Love Bite' can't be rotting, no, no, no! I recall whining to my husband about the drastic advice that Neil and the Nerds were giving me. I was sure they had to be wrong – or at least only partly right. So at first I resisted the full emergency treatment, but still wound up doing pretty much what Neil Lipson had directed.



Photo 3, 9/3/12

of babies!

(Photo 4, 10/24/12)

In January 2013, I photographed four of my young 'Rob's Love Bite' plants that were happy and thriving. Some showed leaf variegation, and some did not. (Photo 5, 1/9/13)



Photo 4, 10/24/12



Photo 5, 1/9/13

Mama plant was "sort of" saved but never again thrived (Photo 3, 9/3/12), and I wound up later discarding her. The six or seven leaves I had put down all grew mouse ears and then babies, and I wound up with **lots**

Other leaf pots produced more babies, and I gave away several of those plants to my various African violet friends.



Photo 6, 6/19/13

My experience with 'Rob's Love Bite' has taught me several things:

Always follow the "size rule," i.e., the pot should be 1/3 of the leaf spread. Planting your African violet in too large a pot is likely to result in slow growth, over-watering, root and crown rot, and a dead plant.

Pay particular attention to the size class of your African violet. Minis are a bit more picky about the correct amount of water.

Be vigilant about any kind of automatic watering, whether wicks or self-watering pots, to be sure the method is still working. Wicks can fail. Self-watering pots can suddenly deliver too much or too little water.

Remember that more plants die from over-watering than from any other cause.

Be willing to ask questions of more experienced growers! If you're on Facebook, you'll find that African Violet Nerds (to name just one of many fine AV groups) has hundreds of helpful members who are eager to assist the newer growers.

Turn to all available resources to learn as much as you can about these wonderful plants, such as the AVSA website and the *African Violet Magazine* and many other online sites where you will find how-to videos, articles, and blogs on all aspects of AV care.

I do feel that maybe I'm "on my way" now. My collection has increased to seventy varieties, all of which appear to be thriving at the moment. Still, I

By June 2013, two of my 'Rob's Love Bite' plants were blooming and, once again, I was in love! (Photo 6, 6/19/13, and (Photo 7, 6/26/13)



Photo 7, 6/26/13

sometimes misjudge, sometimes make a mistake about lighting, fertilizer, soil mix, and general care that my plants require. When that inevitably

happens, I consult my AV friends, try to learn what I need to learn, pick up the mess, forgive myself, move on, and keep growing!

Water Quality

By Sharon Rosenzweig

An important factor in growing beautiful African violets is the quality of the water you use. There are many sources of water for your plants—some good; some not so good. Water should not be too hard (i.e. too many dissolved particles and minerals) or too soft (too much salt) and should have a pH range of 6.5 to 7.2.

City Water - Many municipalities add chlorine, chloramine, and fluoride to the water supply to make it drinkable. It can cause leaf burn and diminished flowering. Chlorine will dissipate over time, but chloramine and fluoride will not. Your local aquarium store carries products designed to remove these additives instantly. It is safe for plants.

Well Water - Most well water contains lots of dissolved minerals and has a high pH. Using it with a fertilizer containing trace elements can lead to mineral toxicity, which causes nutrient lockup. Have your well water tested before using on African violets.

Softened Water - Increases the saline content of the water. This will alter both the pH and the electrical conductivity of the soil, thereby diminishing your African violet's ability to absorb water and nutrients.

Bottled Water - Also contains sodium. It is important to leach plants on a regular basis (every 2 months) to prevent salt buildup in the potting mix.

Distilled Water - Contains no minerals or

trace elements. You must use a fertilizer with trace minerals. Check pH as distilled water can be acidic.

Rain Water - Can greatly vary in pH due to air pollution. So if you use it, you need to measure and monitor the pH closely.

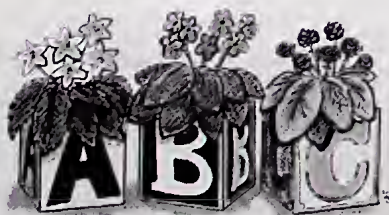
Dehumidifier Water - Generally no solid particles, but pH can vary. Also, depending upon the material of the coils, the water can have some leached metal content. May add bacteria and fungus to the water due to lack of sterility of the collection container and inner workings of the unit.

Reverse Osmosis Water - Reverse osmosis water has gone through several layers of filters and membranes so it is lacking minerals and dissolved solids. Adding fertilizer with trace minerals to the water or soil can help counter this. Unfortunately, installing a system in your home is costly. Some saltwater aquarium shops will sell reverse osmosis water. Bring your own containers.

Conclusions - If your plants look fine, don't change anything. If your plants don't look fine, check your water!

Remember - If you make any changes to your watering, do it on just a few plants first and check results after several weeks before applying to your whole collection.

From *Ye Bay Stater*, Publication of the Bay State AVS



Small Talk

By Laurel D. Goretsky

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I have been thinking a lot lately about starting over with my African violet collection. Since that seemed a bit too drastic, and I do love a lot of the plants that I have, I wondered what I could do to get out of the funk that I have been feeling.

After much thought, I decided to go back in my memories and remember what it was that excited me about growing African violets, especially miniatures and semi miniatures, in the first place. I wanted to try and recapture that feeling I had when I went to my first convention or when I entered in my first show.

With a smile on my face, I recalled some of my first winning plants. 'Rob's Cool Fruit' was a good grower for me. It is a semi miniature with double white pansy blossoms with a rose-pink edge. The leaves are crown variegated medium green, white, and yellow. The variegation looked so beautiful I became hooked on variegated plants. Another 'Rob's' plant that I enjoyed success with was the semi miniature trailer 'Rob's Humpty Doo'. This trailer has semidouble white sticktite pansy blossoms with a wide bright blue edge. The foliage is medium green, pointed, and glossy. I found this to be a fairly easy to grow trailer and a very good bloomer. If you are not familiar with trailers, they are not judged for their symmetry as are standard violets and miniatures and semi miniatures. They are judged on form. Trailers must have 3 crowns coming from one single stem and have an even amount of blooms on each crown. It isn't as hard as it might seem, and with a plant like 'Rob's Humpty Doo' it's fun growing trailers! I think I am going to have to acquire these two favorites again.

I believe we can keep learning even when we have been growing violets for years. However, some of the early lessons are precious. I had a beautiful 'Ness' Satin Rose' that I was growing as a standard. Imagine my disappointment when I



got to our local show to be told that it was actually a semi miniature and I couldn't enter it! I've mentioned it before, but again, make sure you check the description of a plant. Before First Class was available for those of us with a computer, we used the Master Variety List (I know that lots still do). The description for 'Ness' Satin Rose' is semi miniature with double rose- mauve two-tone star blossoms. The leaves are dark green, quilted, scalloped/red back. Unless you are the hybridizer, you need to check.

Do you remember how it felt when you waited to see a plant bloom for the first time? We get so busy sometimes that we forget to find delight in the little things. I recalled my excitement when 'Irish Flirt' bloomed for me. 'Irish Flirt' is a semi miniature with double bright green and white frilled star blossoms. The foliage is medium green and wavy. I thought the blossoms looked like little cabbages! Another plant I enjoyed seeing bloom is 'Rob's Love Bite'. This is a miniature with semidouble black-red pansy blossoms. The leaves are crown variegated dark green, cream, and beige with a red back. The dark red blossoms against the crown variegation make a stunning combination. I have many more plants that I have enjoyed seeing bloom, and I am sure that there will be many more in the future.

I already feel much more excited toward growing my violets again. I don't know what stage you are in with your growing, but I want to encourage you not to give up. Our African violets can bring us much joy and hope if we just give them a chance.

Take care and happy growing.

African Violets from Russian Hybridizer Tatyana Pugacheva



PT-Louise
Standard



PT-Temptress
Standard



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

Rob's Bad Bunny

Exhibited by: Margaret DePhillippo

Hybridized by: R. Robinson

Miniature

Propagating African Violets

By Carie Nixon

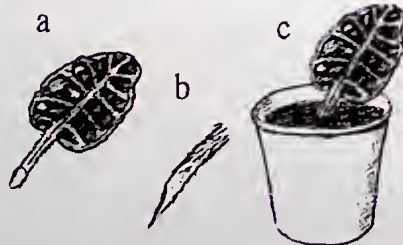
African violets are some of the easiest plants in the world to reproduce. Here are a few methods that are known to work well.

From Seed: African violet species can be started from seed. Also, species and varieties can be cross pollinated, or hybrids can be self-pollinated to produce new varieties. Established hybrids do not come true from seed.

Vegetation Propagation: Exact genetic copies of the parent plant (cloning) can be produced by taking part of the parent plant and starting new plantlets from it. Here are a few techniques to try:

Tissue Culture - Plant tissue, such as leaves, is chopped into tiny pieces which are placed into a vial of sterilized nutrient-rich medium and allowed to grow. Each small piece will produce one or more plantlets. African violets are easily propagated by tissue culture and are often used to teach horticulture students tissue culture techniques. They are seldom reproduced in this manner except by students or hobbyists of tissue culture. Tissue culture kits can be purchased from several mail order sources.

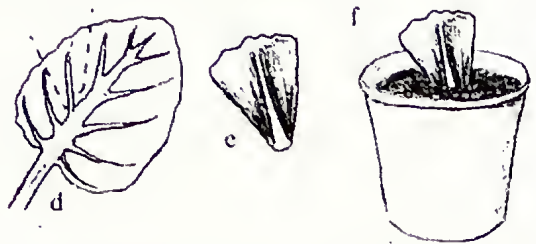
Leaf cuttings - This is the most commonly used method of reproducing African Violets. Remove a young, healthy leaf from the plant and cut the petiole (leaf stalk) to about 1 inch long (a). If you cut the petiole at an angle (b) more roots will be able to form, and the leaf may produce more plantlets than if it is cut straight across. Place potting mix into small pot, drill a hole in the soil with a pencil or similar tool, and plant the leaf cutting. If the leaves are small, more than one can be placed in a pot, but do not put more than one variety in each pot.



BE SURE TO LABEL THE POT WITH THE

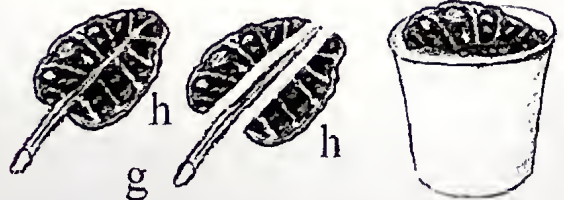
PLANT VARIETY IMMEDIATELY! Water the soil and place the potted cutting in a clear, enclosed container or plastic bag to maintain a high humidity. Make sure there are some air holes however.

Leaf wedge - Sometimes a leaf is damaged and only a piece of it can be used. As long as a major vein is intact, it can be used to start more plants. Cut a wedge from the leaf that includes a vein (d and e). Plant the wedge with the cut tip down (f), and treat it like a leaf cutting.

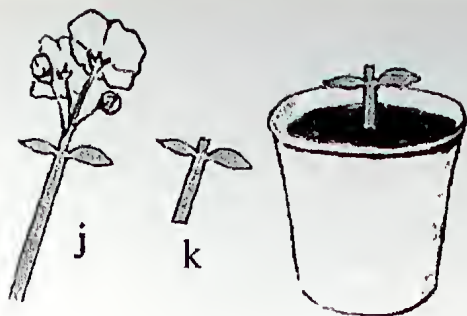


Leaf side - African violets can also be propagated by cutting a long section from the side of a leaf, much like is commonly used to reproduce Streptocarpus. By cutting away the venter vein (g), you will get two half leaves (h). Plant them by making a small trench in the soil, and burying the edge of the leaf about 1/4 inch into the soil (i). Treat it like the leaf cutting from this point. New plantlets will form at the base of each vein.

Cut leaf sides from the centre vein



Flower stem cutting [peduncle] - If the flower stem has a part of fairly large leaves (j) just below the flowers, it too can be used to start new plants. This is one of the few reliable ways to reproduce chimeras. Cut the flower stalk about 1 inch below the leaves, and remove the flowers. Pot it in potting mix with the leaves just above the surface (k). Treat it like a leaf cutting, and in a few weeks, one plantlet will form below each leaf.



Removing suckers - Sometimes an African violet produces suckers on the stem (l). Remove the suckers; plant them; and treat them like leaf cutting. This is one of the easiest methods of producing new African violets. Most chimeras will re-

produce true using this method. While trailers easily produce, many African violets can be encouraged to produce them by either stressing the plants by keeping them on the dry side, or by cutting out the center of the crown (the newly forming leaves in the center) of the parent plants.



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Shows and Judges

Bill Foster, Shows and Judges Committee

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Here are few changes to the Handbook: Page 52- In the last column I asked you to add, under condition, after "plant not centered in pot," *plant smaller than 9" inches in diameter. Please change that statement to read: standard plant less than 9" in diameter.* The reason for adding "standard" is to eliminate any confusion one might have when reading under **CONSIDERATIONS FOR JUDGING SINGLE-CROWN MINIATURES AND SEMIMINIATURES**, on page 54, the third paragraph, which states "The judging considerations for miniatures and semiminiatures are the same as for standard African violets except as defined below:"



Top of page 68. Please replace the first paragraph with this: *Interpretive flower arrangements are defined as designs using fresh-cut African violet blossoms. Fresh-cut, dried, treated, or colored plant material, and man-made material other than artificial plant material may be used unless restricted by the schedule.* This change is to clarify that the same "other plant material" for interpretive plant arrangement and interpretive flower arrangements are in agreement.

Here are a few more questions:

The Handbook states that one or more blooming African violet plants are required in container gardens. Does this mean that a non-blooming variegated African violet plant cannot be used also?

You may use non-blooming African violet plants as long as you have used at least one blooming African violet.

A number of judges have written asking if they are required to use a chart that has been used as a handout at judging schools and other programs, to determine blossom count when judging African violets.

No.

ATTENTION TEACHERS: Those of you who have the latest copy of "Teaching Tools" please make this correction: find the page with the heading **AVSA SCALE OF POINTS** - go to lower part of the page and look under "deduct up to ½ point for each instance: Line through *Not enough blossoms for plant size.*" We will try to get this corrected on the website as soon as possible.



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

Shirl's Red Sky

Exhibited by: Lindi Wurzer

Hybridized by: S. Sanders

Miniature



Photo Credit: Paula Bal

Buckeye Scrumptious

Exhibited by: Paula Bal

Hybridized by: P. Hancock

Large

Do Your African Violets Have Droopy Leaves?

By Ruth Coulson

Of course the ideal is for the leaves to be reasonably flat, but sometimes they fall far short of that ideal. Often they just droop. Why is it so?

Of course, some plants do the reverse. By their nature, they just aren't capable of flat leaves. Very ruffled leaves, or 'girl' leaves, for instance, just can't be expected to lie flat. People either love or hate, ruffled foliage, but whichever category you fall into, you just have to accept them for what they are.

Some African violets, mostly much older hybrids, have leaves that are produced in a vase shape rather than a flat wheel. 'Lavender Delight' is like this as a young plant. One I grew years and years ago called 'Pink Flame' always produced its leaves upwards and then out, rather than flat from the center. No point in trying to make it do anything else!

Neither of these two growth patterns are "droopy," but others are. And those problems are often a matter of the way they are grown. Their conditions, in fact. We might all, from time to time, find plants whose leaves are beginning to curve downwards around the pot. This is the shape that always looks very sad to me, like a down curving mouth. So why are they droopy?

If they are grown by natural light at a window, they will have the light always reaching them from the side. If you fail to turn the plant regularly, the whole thing may turn towards the light. Even if you do, it is possible that the leaves on each part of the plant, will turn down to catch as much light as possible. This is just part of growing by natural light. Using a support for the leaves is the best way of keeping them in a more horizontal position.

Leaves will also curl downwards if plants are living in a cold position in winter. I am not quite sure why this is, but it is certainly a sign that they are looking for more warmth. There are two "cures." Keep the plants warmer, or quite simply,

wait for spring. When the weather is warmer, the plants should once again start growing in their normal pattern. Encourage this by removing old droopy leaves and repotting to stimulate growth. Spring is the prime season for repotting.

Saddest of all is when plants have leaves that are droopy because they are wilting. Even this can have more than one cause. Firstly and most obviously, it is because the plant is very dry and can no longer take up enough water to keep its leaves turgid. The solution? Water regularly, keeping the violets evenly moist. Wick-watering is an easy way to achieve this.

It isn't quite so obvious, but African violets also wilt if you have watered them all too well. In this case where the potting mix is stagnant and boggy, the roots cannot function and just rot. When the fine roots have rotted away, the plant can no longer take up enough water to keep turgid just like when you have forgotten to water. So check before watering a droopy plant because you might be making the situation worse.

Never respond to a wilted plant by flooding it, even if it is dry. Moderation is the key. Remember that alternating periods of very dry with very wet are a good way of causing root rot.

So how can you prevent these problems? Just by good careful growing, really. Use a leaf support for plants that have a tendency to hang their leaves down even when they are healthy and not wilting. The leaf support can be made from anything that can be fastened under the leaves to keep them flat. Keep plants as warm as possible during the winter. Turn plants regularly. Use a suitable open-textured potting mix that won't become a swamp. Control watering carefully, possibly using wick-watering, which is the easiest method of watering.

The Rolls-Royce method of encouraging a flat growth habit is to grow under artificial light. This

way, the light all falls from above so that the leaves are naturally produced in a flat shape with the flowers in the center.

Are you wondering what girl leaves are, which plants have ruffled foliage, how to make a leaf support, or how to do wick-watering? Answers to these questions and many others are available at

the meetings where there are demonstrations and talks. You can also ask other members or read the books and magazines in the library. The knowledge is all there. Or just wait for it to turn up in this magazine - it all does eventually.

From *The African Violet*, Official Journal of the African Violet Association of Australia



APPLICATION TO JOIN

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Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Petite Blarney

Exhibited by: Anne Brown

Hybridized by: H. Pittmann

Miniature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Silent Prayer

Exhibited by: Ben Haning

Hybridized by: K. Stork

Large

Question Box

By Ralph Robinson

P.O. Box 9 • Naples, NY 14512

Email: robsviolet@aol.com

As is always the case, we are far too busy to reply to mail (or e-mail), though we do read all of it. Should you want a personal reply, we are more than willing to answer phone calls made during our normal business hours (12-5 pm EST), since we can work and talk at the same time. For those with access to the Internet, we can be reached at commentsvioletbarn.com via our web-site, at www.violetbarn.com, or via our Facebook page. The web-site also contains a wealth of information (and answers to many of your questions).



Q: I'm about to move. I have a few violets, full adults that I have had for several years. I've noticed how amazing your packaging is. While your system works well for the younger plants you ship, I was wondering if you have any suggestions on how I can move the adults? My plants are too large to wrap in cones as you do for shipping. I don't want to leave them behind, nor do I want to get them destroyed in the moving process as I am travelling quite a distance with them.

A: Larger plants are more difficult to wrap and ship, this is why we don't do this. It can be done, but it's a lot more work. The concept is the same. We cover surface of the pot with a "collar," a flat sheet of thin plastic with a slit from the center of the sheet to an edge. This collar is over the surface of the soil and beneath the leaves, with the neck of the plant moving along the slit. For smaller plants a rubber band is sufficient to hold the sides of the collar to the pot. For a large plant, you might need heavier plastic (or an extra layer of collar) and perhaps taping the collar to the pot. Of course, if you don't expect the plants to be turned upside down (which we take for granted in shipping), all this extra work isn't necessary. As for the "cones," these are just sheets of paper that the collared plant is secured to (by tape) then rolled up in. Since the diameter of the rolled cone is about that of the pot,

the plant's leaves need to be bent upwards to fit inside the cone. Since it is easier to bend fewer, smaller, leaves, this is why we don't normally ship plants with lots of large leaves. The height of the cone (and size of paper) is determined by the length of the leaves and the size of the box. A larger plant in a larger pot could be wrapped the same way, but the cone would need to be larger and stiffer to hold and support the larger, and heavier, plant and pot.

If space (and an upside down box), isn't an issue, it would be easier to transport your plants much as exhibitors do to and from shows. There are many methods, though I'll describe two. Probably the most common is to simply fill a box with shredded paper, or similar material, making "nests" for your plants with the paper inside the box. Place a thin sheet of plastic, like a trash bag, over the paper-this will keep the sharp edges of the paper from bruising the undersides of your leaves. Then place your plants in your nest. Use enough paper so that it and the plants don't shift easily in transit. Another method is to glue an empty pot, of the same size that your plant is potted in, to the inside bottom of the box. Then just insert your potted plant into the empty pot in the box.

Personally, I'd do none of the above. Why spend your time packing your plants, fussing about not breaking a leaf or two? It's likely you won't have much time to care for your plants when you first move into your new home anyway. In the meantime, your plants will be (over)growing and, likely, neglected. Younger, smaller, plants are easier to transport, and easier to care for and by the time you've finished moving in and have time to tend to them properly, they will have grown into mature plants again! Consider pruning back and repotting (or restarting) your larger plants. If you have time to prepare, root some leaves, and bring the rooted leaves with you. This will save you lots of space, lots of stress, and lots

of time once you arrive.

Q: We received an order of your violets a bit more than a year ago. They've done real well, but this summer we did notice some fuzzy white on the leaves of one plant in our sun room near an open window. When winter came, we moved them to another window in a warmer area of the house. When we got to December, the white stuff was showing up on all the plants, and they began to wilt. They were planted in self-watering ceramic pots and planted in a peat, vermiculite, and perlite mix. We still have a couple of plants in a different room that are surviving. What did we do wrong and what do you suggest?

Answer: The problem might be one or more of the following: mealy bug, powdery mildew, or soil/water issues. If this "fuzzy white stuff" is easily blown off the surface of the leaves, it's most likely powdery mildew. Powdery mildew is a common problem and rarely will cause a plant to die. Since spores are always in the air, it can't be eliminated, and tends to be most visible when conditions are favorable for it. Usually this is when night temperatures drop and air is stagnant. For most homes, this means late fall through spring, when windowsills are cold and the air circulation in a closed house is less. To treat, you can wash your plants in mild soap and (room temperature) water, lightly apply (then brush off) powdered sulphur, or spray with a neem oil (or similar) product. Try to provide good air circulation and even temperatures.

Mealy bugs are a more serious concern, since they are difficult to eradicate without using expensive (and more toxic) chemicals. If the "fuzzy white stuff" doesn't easily blow off, is seen in leaf axils or along the plant stem, especially near the soil level, and is a bit "sticky" or "gooey" in texture, you likely have mealybugs. You might also see them (or their eggs) on the plant's root ball or the inside of the pot, or worse, as little white grains sprinkled about the surface surrounding the plant (the windowsill or plant shelf). Left untreated, the plant will lose vigor, suffer, and eventually die. In the meantime, the rest of your collection is at risk of being infected. For this reason, we always suggest discarding plants with visible mealy bug in-

festations or, at the least, cleaning, washing, and restarting these plants. If you choose to treat your plants, use products containing imidacloprid as the active ingredient, such as Admire.

Though this won't explain the stuff on the leaves, a possible contributing factor to your plant's demise might be watering and/or soil issues. In the absence of mealybugs, a watered plant that appears wilted may, in fact, be overwatered. Use a pot size only as large as, or slightly larger, than the current size of the plant's root system. When using a constant-watering system, also be sure to use a soil mix consisting of at least 50 percent perlite.

Q: I am currently battling thrips. I water my violets via wicking and was wondering if I can put imidacloprid in the wicking water. And, if so, how long can I do this? I know I have to disbud. Also, should I treat Streptocarpus and Primulina (Chirita) as well? Any other suggestions? I cannot afford the other chemicals for controlling thrips.

Answer: Unfortunately, this is another very common problem among violet growers. At some time, everyone with more than a few plants will likely encounter it. You may add imidacloprid in the water, but it may be of minimal effect in ridding you of thrips. Thrips are particularly difficult to eradicate because they reproduce easily and quickly, are good at avoiding contact with treatments, and live out their lives in any one place on the plant. Thrips lay eggs in leaves, pupate on the soil, and then feed on the plant or blooms when mature. Even if imidacloprid was an effective treatment, this would mean that, at most, you'd only be attacking what's in the soil or water. Because adults are above the soil level, you would need to spray or treat the plant to attack what's there, and this still leaves the eggs! There are a number of more effective chemicals and treatments, but as you mentioned, all are expensive. Even then, eradication requires thorough coverage and multiple treatments. "Beneficial" (i.e. thrips eating) insects can be used, but these can be expensive and don't promise eradication either.

Whatever course of treatment you decide on, an

initial disbudding is a good option, as is repotting (toss out those larvae). Afterwards, diligence is the key. Continue to look for thrips as they appear. Do this every 2-5 days, and look closely. Don't wait to see mature thrips...by then they've laid eggs (and they can lay a LOT). Any bloom or bud with even a HINT of thrips activity should be removed. Look for distortion, a dusty look, spilled pollen, off-color blooms, you name it. Also, try to segregate plants you know to have thrips from those that don't, to keep the population from spreading. Avoid very warm conditions, since this shortens their reproductive cycle and increases the population more quickly. This, in addition to any treatment that you can provide should eventually get rid of a small population. If you have lots of plants and a bigger infestation, this will be harder, and you may have

to settle for control rather than eradication.

Q: I'm new to this. Do you recommend clay or plastic pots for my violets?

A: If you've had success growing plants in clay pots, I won't tell you differently - do what works. That said, I think you'll be better off using plastic. Plastic pots are cleaner and easier to clean and reuse. They're also lighter and easier to use and store. Also, unlike clay pots, they're nonporous, which means it will be much easier to keep soil evenly moist, especially with smaller plants in smaller pots. Glazed pots can be a compromise between the two. They'll have the heavier feel, more decorative look, yet still be nonporous and have a smooth, easier to clean, surface.

Rob's Dodo Bird

*Exhibited by:
Debbie McInnes
Hybridized by:
R. Robinson
Semiminiature*



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky



Cheekwood Botanical Gardens

Destination: Nashville, TN

AVSA's 68th National Convention

May 25th - June 1, 2014



Downtown Nashville



Grand ole Oprey



General Jackson Showboat



Nashville Skyline

Making Order out of The Chaos that Has Invaded Your Violet Collection

Have you recently looked over your violet collection and thrown up your hands in despair over the disarray? Do too many plants need repotting and/or perhaps tossing into the garbage? Do all your trays need a good cleaning? If you're reading this in the Northern hemisphere, the odds are long that it's a dreary January day when the hours of sunlight are among the shortest. Somehow that makes the mess all the worse.



Does the task of getting your violet collection back in order seem too much to handle? Don't despair. You can tame the wild jungle that your collection has somehow morphed into. Let's take a look at how you can do this without getting discouraged.

The Master Game Plan

First, realize that you don't have to attack the whole mess all at once. Rome wasn't built in a day and you don't have to get your collection rebuilt in a day either. Accept the fact that you can work on it piecemeal and then get started with your game plan.

Begin by surveying your collection and breaking it down into manageable pieces. These are portions of your collection that you can reasonably handle in one sitting. Better to break it into sections that are too small and work on two in one day than the opposite. Depending on how your collection is situated, you might divide your collection by:

- Location (room)
- Plant stand
- Shelf
- Type of violet
- Plant type (if you've got more than just violets in your collection)
- Subset, such as a group being prepped for show (12 or more weeks)
- When I do this, I divide my collection by shelf.

But, I hit all the shelves in one room or on one stand right after each other. So, after a few sessions of working on my plants, I either have a plant stand that has been completely revamped or my sunroom is looking good.

Once you've got your breakdowns, make a list. This list will go along with your divisions above. It might simply be the divisions, or each of those divisions might be further broken down. For

example, you might have one item as repot everything on a certain shelf and another item might be to remove plants, clean the tray, and then reposition plants back on that shelf. As you are probably painfully aware, when you try and put plants back on a tray, they won't fit, especially if you are attempting to give them each adequate space.

When you are finished, reevaluate. Are any of the pieces too big? If so, subdivide them. And be realistic about your plan. This is not the time to be overambitious.

Getting Started

Once you've decided on your course of action, pick the first item on your list. Make sure it is something you can get done relatively easily. Resist the temptation to start your biggest disaster first. The reason for this is you don't want to get discouraged before you begin. Once you've finished the first item, cross it off the list. There's something very satisfying about crossing items off a To-Do list.

As you go through your collection, be realistic. Don't try and save every sad looking plant. The best growers regularly discard those that don't perform for them. This can be because it is a difficult plant or it is a plant that just decides to give you a hard time, even though it grows like a weed for everyone else. We've all got those nemeses so don't become discouraged. There are too many

other wonderful and relatively easy to grow violets out there to let one dishearten you.

Your revitalization project can take as long as needed. Some lucky folks will manage to get everything done in a day or two. For others, it will take much longer. It will depend on your other responsibilities, as well as the size of your collection.

Sticking to the Plan

Once you've developed your plan, don't treat it as the bible. It is not written in stone; it's just a guideline to help you get from A to B. If after working on one part of your collection, you feel inclined to move to something on the bottom of your list, go for it. Remember, the goal is to get your collection back in order as quickly as you can.

Also, occasionally, for whatever reason, you'll want to repot one particular plant out of order. Maybe you saw the same plant at a show or you noticed this particular plant is about to burst the pot. Don't be held back by your plan. Go with the flow and work with the plant that seems to be calling to you.

Closing Thoughts

In this article, we've addressed the situation as a one-time project. If you let your collection get too out of control, eventually it will become more work than fun. And that would be a shame. Ideally, you should do a little at a time. Now, some growers have great success having one big massive repotting session each year. For me, anyway, this can be overwhelming. So, rather than let everything go and then try and get everyone into shape all at once, a better approach is to regularly work on your collection.

If you read interviews with the most successful growers or listen to them talk, the very best ones devote some time to grooming their collections every week. Spend a little time each week, and you'll have a collection that looks good year-round, not just after you've had your annual go at it.

The good news is African violets are very forgiving. They may not be show-ready this year, but as long as you can salvage a leaf or two, you should have a show-worthy violet in less than a year.



Luncheon Auction It's not too late!

Edna Rourke

The "Violet Pickin in Tennessee Convention and the Auction is just about here. It's not too late to make a donation. We can still use your help to make the auction a success and the best yet. Our past success at this event has been due to the very generous donations of our members, both amateur and commercial.

To our members and affiliates, won't you consider making a donation of a violet-related item or violet related craft item? To our hybridizers and commercial members, donations of supplies or newly introduced

plants or cuttings would be very welcome and most appreciated.

Your help and generous donations insure the success of the auction.

Please give me a call at 203-926-9716 or email me at Apapillon@aol.com and let me know what items you will be donating. I'll be looking forward to hearing from you.

See you in Nashville!

Edna

How Did the 'Wasp' African Violet Varieties Begin?

By Tina Moreno

It all started back in 1957 when Jimmy Dates obtained a plant called 'Bustles' from Mrs. Hotchkiss in Peoria, Ill. A sport showed up in a pan of leaves she had set down of 'Purple Prince.' The leaves were compound, also known as "bustled." The flowers were purple. The petals fluted and thread like.

Jimmy Dates saw the



Senk's beanstalk
Sayeh Beheshti



WhiteFlybustle
Rachel Martin

'wasp' and 'star' blossoms. His first registered introduction was 'Pink Wasp' in 1964.

These wonderfully unusual African violet blossom types usually (but not always) also have bustled foliage. Mr. Dates described plants with "compound leaves (bustled) as leaves that have one or two leaflets attached at the base of the blade on the back side. In some varieties, the leaflet is like another leaf on the back of the blade which may be 1/2 to 3/4 as large as the blade."

His description of a 'wasp' blossom is: "Two upper petals fluted up and backward, three lower petals deeply cut, reminiscent of individual petals." I believe 'Blue Tail Fly,' 'Pink Fly,' and 'Royal,' all represent this blossom type well. This wasp form is



Blue Tail Fly
Linda McQueen



Pink Fly
Tina Moreno

personally my favorite blossom shape. Mr. Dates also described the 'star' blossom-shape produced through hy-

bridizing wasps: "Blossoms which are symmetrical like stars, and deeply lobed like wasps. Some of the plants with this blossom type include 'Kaneland Beauty,' 'Marion Star,' and 'Cool Hand Pink'."



Kaneland beauty
Sayeh Beheshti

He also found some other odd flower traits. If you know 'Blue Owl,' you may have thought it



Aeolian Wasp
Rachel Martin

was a wasp blossom. Jimmy Dates describes 'Blue Owl' as a "standard blossom type whose dipped upper two petals are small and dipped down-

ward toward the center of the flower." 'Yet another interesting variety, 'Lovely Wasp' is a sport of 'Lovely' and was given to Jimmy Dates

for release by Mrs. Tretter of St. Louis.

In developing the various wasp hybrids, Jimmy



Spootnik

Tina Moreno

has not been seen for years) and *S. diplotricha* in 'Fire Wasp.' I do not think the traits of the species are noticeable, as it required eight different crosses to develop this particular hybrid.

Wasps are not your typical African violet, nor do they behave like your typical African violet. Their petioles twist and turn in wild ways and sometime form an 'S' shape rather than lying straight and symmetrical. Some grow vertical like a beanstalk. This

occurs more as they age. If you want to grow a perfect show plant, you should look elsewhere. If you want something instead that is a little unusual and interesting, then a wasp variety could be a plant for you. A



White Fly

Jennie Myers

few wasps grow very symmetrical, with lots of blooms, and might be good show plants. 'Blue Tail Fly,' 'Nymph Fly,' and 'Pink Fly' are three I can think of that could be shown, especially when younger plants.

Are you now intrigued? Some people think these violets are not so wonderful—that they are odd-looking and a bit unruly. This may be true in some cases, and wasp plants may not always be ideal for showing, but there are groups of people who are genuinely intrigued with these plants and are dedicated to the preservation and hybridization of this fascinating type of African violet.

I have formed an online Facebook group called "Love for Wasps and Unusual African Violets.". It is my goal to be able to preserve and compile an entire collection of Dates' wasps to share with others before they disappear forever. Those in the group also enjoy the other unusual African violets, including those that have longifolia, and Clackamas foliage, and those with bell, and star-shaped blossoms. I would like to invite anyone interested to come join us to learn about wasps or to teach us a thing or two. We would also love to hear about other wasp varieties out there in the world. Please come and join the fun. The URL is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Loveforwasps/>

As I said earlier, Jimmy Dates' hybridizing with African violets resulted in the introduction of sixty varieties, about twenty-one of which are registered. Of the approximate sixty varieties, about thirty-three of them are wasps and/or bustled foliage. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate some of these cultivars. Most of the Dates' hybrids were created over forty years ago, making them Vintage Violets. Here is a list of Dates' hybrids which I am trying to locate (both wasp and non-wasp varieties):

Betty Little	Lithe Lassie
Black Friar	Lunar Lily
Blue Wasp	Nancy Ann
Bonnice	Merida Wasp
Burgandy Wasp	Peppermint Frost
Calico Wasp	Pink Cherub
Columbella	Pink Fingers
Cool Hank Pink	Pink Proliffity
Dates Fanfare	Pink Owl
Dates Jubilee	Pink Wasp
Dave Masterson	Rachel
Wasp	Royal Mountbatton
Dippity Do	Royal Wasp
Evagene	Sabrina
Fantasy Wasp	San Francisco Wasp
Fire Wasp	Snow Owl
First Recital	Thelma Usinger
Intensified Pride	Trail Charmer
Jimmie Crack Corn	Wham Bang
Knight Light Wasp	Wildwing
Krista (Krisie) Lynn	Zuri

If you or someone you know has these unusual African violets in a collection, and are willing to share a couple of leaves to help us complete a collection of Date's hybrids before they are gone,

please send an e-mail to Gecko2T@gmail.com. You may also contact me at this e-mail address to ask other questions, or to share information you might have about wasp African violets.

Sucker Removal

By Kent & Joyce Stork

From their book, *You Can Grow African Violets*

How to Remove Suckers without Repotting

There are several tools which can be used to remove suckers including dental instruments, nut picks, or "sucker pluckers" (a tool made just for this job). Our favorite is a slightly dull pencil. It is cheap and usually available, and it feels comfortable in your hand as you perform the delicate maneuvers required. Sucker removal can also be done with a firm finger, but it is very easy to break leaves unintentionally.

Closely examine the plant from the side to determine exactly the point from which the sucker is originating. Place the point of your tool just behind the lowest leaf; right at the growth point, and apply a little pressure to the side and/or up. If the tool is properly positioned, the sucker will pop loose intact. This takes a little practice! It is especially difficult if the leaves of your violet are growing in very closely aligned rows (like perfectly grown violets should).

If the sucker breaks apart into several pieces as it is removed, just throw it away. Do go back in and do some housekeeping. Using your tool, prod and poke at the spot from which the sucker came to

remove any remaining sucker tissue. It is very important to be sure that none of the growth point remains. Otherwise, the sucker will grow right back.

How to Divide a Violet with Overgrown Suckers

If suckers have been allowed to grow to a size nearly equal to the original crown, it will be necessary to divide the plant. This is best done when the plant is a little bit dry and the foliage is less turgid so that fewer leaves accidentally get broken.

Remove the entire plant from its pot and lay it sideways so that there is a good view. Close observation should reveal the fork(s) where the crowns are joined. Gently cut into the fork between the conjoined crowns until one of them can be pulled free. The leaves will almost certainly be tangled together, so be patient as you work them apart. The detached sucker(s) will probably be left without any roots. The main crown with roots is usually left with a distorted-looking appearance, an exposed stem, and an uneven form. It will need to be repotted and shaped before it can regain its former beauty.

Coming Events

February 15 - ARIZONA

Desert Sun AV & Gesneriad Society of Phoenix

Sale & Display

Feb 15 - 9:00am - 5:00pm

Valley Garden Center

809 North 15th

Phoenix, AZ 85007

Contact: 623-398-8133

Email: anncie@cox.net

February 22 - OKLAHOMA

AVS of Greater Tulsa

Annual Show/Sale

Tulsa Garden Center

2435 S Peoria Ave

Tulsa, OK

Feb 22 - 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Info: John Carter

Email: johnntcarter@valornet.com

March 7 & 8 - FLORIDA

Central Florida AVS AVSA Judged Show/Sale

African Violets and Gesneriads

Mar 7 - Noon - 4pm

Mar 8 - 10am - 4pm

Sales room opens at 9 a.m.

March 8 - CALIFORNIA

South Coast AVS

Judged Show/Sale

South Coast Botanic Garden

26300 Crenshaw Blvd.

Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA

Hours: 11:30 am - 4 pm show

11 am - 4 pm-Sales

Info: Jacquie Eisenhut

(310) 325-2993

Email: jeisenhut@hotmail.com

March 15 & 16 - TEXAS

First Austin AVS

45th Annual Judged Show/Sale

Austin Area Garden Center

Zilker Park Botanical Garden

2220 Barton Springs Road

Austin, TX 78746

Mar 15 - 11:00am - 4:30pm

Mar 16 - 11:00am - 3:30pm

Info: Susan Kautz (512) 365-1818

email: gizzmo@austin.rr.com

www.faaavs.org

March 15 & 16 - COLORADO

Rocky Mountain AV Council

Annual Judged Show and Sale

Tagawa Garden Center

7711 S. Parker Road, Centennial CO.

March 15 - 9am to 4pm

March 16 - 10am to 4pm

Info: NLevine28@msn.com

Website: RMAVC.com

Identifying Problems in Your Growing Conditions

By Doug Burdick

When we first moved into our house we had well water. Before we moved in, I realized that there were bubbles in the water, so I filled a bottle of water from the tap and took it into the city to get tested. On a hunch, I decided to hold a match to it and saw that it ignited with a blue flame, so I knew the bubbles were methane gas.

We knew that we had to install a water system to take out all the methane, but that was not the only problem. Our well was 350 ft deep so there was also a lot of iron in the water.

At the time, I had pink episcias in 8" pots and they were quite beautiful. I made the mistake of watering them directly from the tap, and within two to three days, they were toast since the water had been too acidic for them.

We ended up having a system to add chlorine and remove methane and iron, but still, the water quality was not that good and had a high pH. So the first thing I did was invest in a reverse osmosis system that provides seventy-five gallons of purified water a day. It's actually meant for a greenhouse so I basically use five gallon buckets that I fill and reuse.

If you have water problems but don't want to invest in a reverse osmosis system, you can use the water from your dehumidifier or rainwater to water your plants.

The base soil mix that I use is a Cornell light mix which is 1 part each of perlite, vermiculite, and peat moss. Everything I use is based off of that mixture with something added to it, whether it's humus, potting soil, Monrovia, or organic fertilizer.

I like to keep my soil in the 5.8 to 6.5 pH range. Whenever I am changing my supply of lime or peat moss, I retest the soil, and I am fortunate that a friend has the equipment to test the pH; but not everyone has this luck.

You can test the pH of your soil with pH strips, if available. One of my favorite places to shop for supplies is my local hydroponic supplier. They often have many choices for pH meters, plus many other supplies. You can often find pH meters of various qualities. Buy the best one you can afford.

Over the years, I have realized that with sphag-

num moss, there are no good bacteria to help the plants grow, but if I add some humus, I can re-introduce the good bacteria plants need as long as it does not make the soil waterlogged. I also use organic fertilizers since they seem to have some organisms that help the plant absorb nutrients. I have never been able to grow large plants without having humus and organic fertilizers in the mix. I also grow a very large garden and like to go to garden sites.

A while back, I found RootShield® WP. It is a type of bacteria (*Trichoderma harzianum* strain T-22) that I added it to the soil in the garden. I also used some for my indoor plants. In the spring, I realized that I didn't have anywhere near the amount of issues I usually have with powdery mildew. I couldn't attribute it to anything except the bacteria. I had only added a tablespoon to a bushel (32 quarts), but it seems that it was inoculating the soil and getting the good bacteria into the soil.

I also add organic fertilizer to my soil mix. I usually find my organic fertilizer at my local hydroponic supplier. If you look carefully, you can usually find fertilizer that also contains mycorrhizae of various strains that help the plants use the fertilizer more efficiently. Many of the good organic fertilizers have various good bacteria that also help with various pathogens. It is good to see the increase in usage and research in the area of biological control.

I like to stick to organic fertilizers but will use others such as Optimara 14-12-14 or the Miracle Grow 20-20-20 - 'Nursery Select' - low-urea nitrogen. At this time, I must point out that the regular 20-20-20 Miracle Grow has a high urea and using that, you risk the chance of burning the microbes in the soil, and as it builds up, you can also burn the roots of your plant. I also use the Peters 15-16-17 - low urea.

I like to use Superphosphate. I buy the 20% concentration and use an inexpensive coffee grinder to grind it into powder so it can be mixed into the soil mix. I stopped using it for a number of years and switched to Bone meal instead, but when I restarted, I noticed a big difference. The bloom quantity is much better.

From *Chatter*, Publication of the AVS of Canada

2014 AVSA Board Nominees

Paula Bal for AVSA Director

My Grandfather introduced me to violets when I was ten. I continued growing into my twenties, joined AVSA, and attended my first AVSA convention in Lancaster, PA. After taking a genetics course in college, I began hybridizing my own violets and sold them to local greenhouses. In my thirties, I took a hiatus from growing plants to raise my children.

Six years ago, I started growing again, re-joined AVSA, and joined my local affiliate, Garden State African Violet Club. I am currently the President and Show Chair, but have also served as Secretary and Vice President of our club. I am also a member of the Tristate African Violet Council and currently serve as their Treasurer. I am a violet Judge and member of the NJ Judge's Council. I was a member of the Entries and Classification Committee at the 2011 AVSA Convention in Cherry Hill, NJ.

I am blessed with a supportive husband and two beautiful children. In my spare time, I love growing my violets, hybridizing, and giving presentations to AVSA clubs and community organizations. I am grateful to the friends I have made as a result of growing African violets and feel honored to be nominated as an AVSA Director.



Having been a member of several African violet organizations that later disbanded or were just too far for travel, I founded my local African violet group in 2006. I was President and newsletter editor for the first six years, and currently

serve as the treasurer. At the Southern California level, I have been active in the African Violet Council of Southern California as the Vice-President, and have served as President of the Judges' Council of Southern California as well as the Treasurer. I have worn many hats within our local club—show chairman, schedule writer, entries chair, staging chair, awards chair, etc. I am currently a Senior Judge as well as an AVSA teacher. My latest project is visiting the senior living facility, where my 96-year-old mother resides, to conduct classes on growing African violets to a group of about twelve very enthusiastic young-at-heart lovely ladies. Each time I leave, they always ask, "When will you be back?"

I am most passionate, however, about my 500+ African violets and their related cousins that have been entered in many a local and national show. I am proud to be nominated for the AVSA Board of Directors and look forward to promoting AVSA and our wonderful hobby.

BJ Ohme for Director

I remember very well my first association with African violets. Growing up in a small town, I was introduced to all kinds of gardeners and flower enthusiasts. My pal and mentor, Lil Ritz, started me out on what has become a life long endeavor when I was around six or seven years old. I grew, killed, threw away, and tried again, and Lil always had more plants waiting for me.

It wasn't until moving to Lincoln, Nebraska, and finding the local society, that I really learned the

Diane Miller for Director

In 1968, I graduated from the University of California Santa Barbara where I completed my teaching credential the following year while also working on my Master's degree. I taught high school for thirty-five years until my retirement in 2003.

In 1970 I started growing African violets, and killed more than I saved! It wasn't until the late 1980's that I discovered AVSA, joined a club, and learned how to properly care for my violets.

techniques and art of growing our favorite plant. I will always remember my first convention, just up the interstate in Omaha, and from then on I was hooked. Seeing Rob's display table with all those perfect little plants will forever be imbedded in my mind! It was a sight to behold, and I've been lucky enough to attend nine AVSA conventions since then. I am a Senior Judge, a Commercial Member of AVSA, and I enjoy giving talks and programs on all aspects of growing and showing African violets and *Streptocarpus*.

I am a member of the Missouri Valley African Violet Council, a Life Member of AVSA, and past President of the Lincoln African Violet Society. I have a degree in Horticulture from the University of Nebraska and run a gardening/landscaping business. I'm also very interested in Iris, Gladiolus, and Dahlias, and it is my hope to move back to the family farm in the near future to start my flower farm, which will finally include shipping African violets and *Streptocarpus*.

It is an honor to be nominated for the position of AVSA Director, and if elected, I will do my very best to serve AVSA for the betterment of the society.

Steve Turner for Director

I would like to thank the Nominating Committee



for placing my name for consideration as an AVSA Director. Our society has a long history, and I hope that I will perform to the standards needed to help us move forward and be successful as an educational organization. We have many issues that need to be

resolved and require us to change our approach to the way we operate. Hopefully, with your guidance and input, I can help the society effect this change.

I grew up in a small town in Ohio and remember my grandmother always having an African violet or two, of which she was so proud. Of course, we were never allowed to touch them. I have also lived in Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, Florida, Virginia, and California before settling down in Michigan for the last forty years. It was here I met my lovely wife, Donna, with whom I share this hobby and who is the driving force behind our addiction. I gave her a violet during our early courtship, and the love of this plant has grown through our years together. Our collection has grown from that one plant to over 500...and that is a conservative number.

Since joining AVSA, our involvement in the hobby has also grown. We hold memberships in AVSA, AVSC, OSAVS, the Gesneriad Society, Michigan State AVS, and two local clubs. I am current president of Michigan State AVS and AVSA Convention Tour Director, as well as an Advanced Judge. I was Convention Chair for the 2012 Detroit. Our newest adventure involves becoming an AVSA Commercial Member, under the banner of Starz N Streps. I look forward to seeing you in Nashville and serving AVSA as a new Director.

Glenda Williams for Director

I am a native Texan and African violet enthusiast living on a small farm in McDade, a quaint rural community near Austin, Texas. My earliest memories are growing up playing and working in the garden with my mother and father. I've loved and



grown African violets since the 1970s, taking temporary sabbaticals for motherhood, aging parents, grand-parenting, higher education, and my professional career.

I am an Advanced Judge and a member of AVSA, the Lone Star African Violet Council First Austin AVS, and the Central Texas Judge's Council. I have served as Vice-President of the First Austin AVS Saturday Group since 2010, and Vice-President of the Central Texas Judges Council since 2012. I have a Bachelor's degree and over thirty-five years experience in the Information Technology industry.

As the local Co-Convention Chair, it was a

remarkable experience working with First Austin AVS members, convention committees, and AVSA leadership to host the memorable 2013 AVSA National Convention. I believe it is the special chemistry and talents of our AVSA membership who are the key to making this organization strong and successful. It is an honor to accept the nomination to represent the AVSA membership, as an AVSA Director.

In Memory

Thelma M. Miller

Thelma M. Miller of Columbus, OH, passed away October 31, 2013. Thelma retired from Hamilton Local Schools. She was also a lifetime member of the Columbus and Ohio State African Violet Society.

Thelma served the AVSA in many ways, most recently as Chairman of the society Ways and Means Committee for several years. You could often find her seated at the Ways and Means table at AVSA conventions, greeting all with a smile and encouraging them to support our society. Thelma is missed.

Dolores O'Sullivan

The Long Island AVS mourns the passing of one of our most active members, Dolores O'Sullivan, on May 22, 2013. Dolores served on the Executive Committee and was President from 1985 - 1987. She held the position of Show Chairman several times and was an AVSA and NYSAVS member and judge for many years.

In 1992 she proudly registered "Numero Uno" from her first hybridizing cross. During this time, she was growing and showing African violets at our annual show and won Best in Show twice. Her favorite job was being Plant Sale Chairman for our club.

It was through Dolores and her friendships with various hybridizers that our club received help and advice when we had an INSV outbreak in 2005. With Dolores leading the charge, our club rebounded back from members losing entire collections and no show, to successfully putting on a show again in 2006, just as beautiful as ever.

Dolores was always ready to share a joke or two

to make you smile and laugh. She loved talking to anyone about their horoscope or medical problems.

We at the Long Island AVS are going to miss her jokes and her banter at our meetings. Her chair may be empty in the back of the room, where she could be found taking care of plant sales, but we will all be hearing her voice, feeling her interest and love of violets, and wishing she was still with us.

Margaret Cass

The AV of Philadelphia regrets the passing of our dear friend and past president, Margaret Cass on September 27th, 2013. Margaret was 91.

Margaret was a member of AVSA, the African Violet Society of Philadelphia, a charter member of Liberty Bell Chapter of the Gesneriad Society, The Gesneriad Society, TriState AV Council of New Jersey, TriState Council AV Judges', Mid-Atlantic AVS (MAAVS), New York State AV Society, AVS of Canada (AVSC), and the Swedish AV Society to name a few.

In addition to local interests, Margaret served as an AVSA judge and Vice-Chairman of the Boyce Eden Research Fund for 28 years. A continued interest in Gesneriad research led her to strongly support various Saintpaulia research foundations. Margaret was an energetic and stabilizing force for continuous learning. As an avid grower, it was not uncommon for her to enter 100 plants at a show. She relished hybridizing *sinningias* and *smithianthas*, focusing on cultivating shorter *smithianthas* with red leaves, most notably 'Maggie's Andorra', still available today. She will be missed by all.



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

Jersey Lilacs

Exhibited by: Paula Bal

Hybridized by: B. Kurzynski

Miniature

The "Perfect" Bloom Head!

By Elmer Godeny

When walking through an African violet show, a plant can take your breath away if it has symmetrical foliage and a full head of blossoms. Whether growing for show, growing for gift giving, or growing a special table centerpiece, growers want that "perfect plant" with the "perfect" symmetry and the "perfect" blossom head. Is there such a thing as the "perfect" African violet? Well, after growing for over twelve years, I have not yet seen the "perfect" plant, although many have come very close.

One of the most frequently asked questions from the general public at our local show is "How do you get all those blossoms on each plant?" To be perfectly honest, it really isn't difficult or magic. It just takes planning, some patience, and know-how.

To get the "perfect" African violet, you need to start with a plant that has good genes. Attend African violet shows in your area and see which varieties are winning awards. Read the "And the Winners Are" column of the *African Violet Magazine* to see which plants are winning top awards nationwide. It is a good bet that these plants have good genes for symmetry and blossoms so try to purchase these varieties. To get good blooms and bloom counts, try to purchase plants with at least one bloom stalk showing color. This will allow you to see whether the plant is blooming "true" or not (although plants can revert as they age). You want to make sure the blossom color and pattern are correct. Don't buy a plant with solid-colored blossoms if it should have a fantasy, or a plant with a pink blossom if it should be white, etc. A description of all the AVSA registered African violets can be found in the *Master Variety List* available from the AVSA office. You can also look at the description of the plant in the hybridizer's catalog or look at a picture of some plants on the AVSA website.

You must wait until the plant gets some age on it before you will get that huge head of blooms. A

young plant with only five or six leaves **will not** put up a head of 50 to 60 blossoms or more. Let the leaves settle down and form some symmetry. Keep the plant happy and growing well. To determine the proper growing conditions, ask local African violet club members for advice, look in any of the issues of the *African Violet Magazine*, or get some information from the AVSA website.

Plants, like all forms of life, want to reproduce and continue the species. African violets can reproduce both sexually and asexually. Asexual reproduction occurs when a leaf or flower stalk is put down in soil or water. There is no mixing of genetic material between two plants, so the offspring will be identical to the parent plant from which the material was taken. Another form of asexual reproduction occurs through sucker formation. Suckers are the beginnings of new plants on the stem of the African violet. Again, the plantlets will be identical to the parent plant. Sexual reproduction occurs when the genetic material from two plants mix to form offspring. Sexual reproduction results in the mixing of the gene pool; deleterious traits will be watered out, and traits that are advantageous for the plant's survival will be strengthened. This is the driving force of evolution. So why bring up this lesson on sexual and asexual reproduction? Because the sexual organs of plants, including African violets, lie within the blossom.

To get that beautiful head of blooms on your African violet, you will need to trick the plant. The reproduction stages of the plant must be hindered for a while to stimulate the plant into making many blossoms at once for reproduction; **disbudding** the plant does this. About three to four months before that special date, start removing bloom and bud stalks from the plant. I remove only those stalks that I can pinch off with my fingers; if they are too small for my fingers, I leave them on. You will want to do this every few days as new stalks will develop. Depending on the weather and

the time of year, about eight weeks before you want your full head of blossoms, stop disbudding the plant and let it come into bloom. After the disbudding process, the plant will put out many more new stalks than if it had been left to bloom the entire time.

Knowing when to stop disbudding is the tricky part. If you stop disbudding too far ahead of your special date, the plant will come into bloom too early and fresh blossoms will not remain; stop disbudding too late, and the plant won't have any open blossoms when you need them. I cautioned above "depending on the weather and time of year" because the eight-week rule can vary. Although African violets are grown indoors, they know what is going on outside. I find that eight weeks is too long before a spring show in Louisiana to stop disbudding. The weather outside is getting warmer, the days are getting longer, and my indoor plants know this. I generally will stop disbudding about four weeks out. Another factor that comes into play when disbudding is the African violet variety; different varieties will come into bloom quicker than others. Miniatures and semiminature African violets will bloom quicker than standard-sized plants. You will want to experiment with your plant before you need that full head of blossoms.

Remember that when you disbud your plant, it will still want to reproduce. Many African violets will put out more suckers as you disbud, allowing it to reproduce asexually. You must hinder **all forms** of reproduction in order for disbudding to work and create the "perfect" head of blossoms. Therefore, while disbudding, it will be necessary to remove all suckers from the plant as they form. Removal of suckers will have the added advantage

of allowing the foliage to form better symmetry around the plant.

When trying to get that full head of blossoms, many growers will change their plant fertilizer to a Super Bloom formula (one with a high middle number and very low first and third numbers). I do not change my fertilizer, as I believe it causes more shock on the plant; any changes in growing conditions can stress the plant.

Lastly, sometimes the buds on the plant will open and the blossoms may prematurely age and shrivel. If this happens, you will want to **debloom** the plant. Take sharp scissors and cut the blossom off at the base of its pedicel (the individual blossom stalk) where it branches from the peduncle (the main blossom stem). Make the cut clean and close to the peduncle so dead nubs don't stick out and distract from the blossom head. Be careful when deblooming, as you don't want to remove too many blossoms. If only a few blossoms remain on a bloom stalk after you debloom, and the flowers are in all different angles from each other, you may want to remove the entire bloom stalk (you make the call based on the aesthetics of the plant).

Lastly, when preparing your plant, **gently** lift all the bloom stalks above the foliage so all the blossoms are above the greenery. This will expose all the blossoms on the plant, making the bloom head look fuller and giving it a more nearly perfect ring shape.

Remember with a little work, some good judgment, patience, and a little know-how, your plants can have a beautiful full head of blossoms. Many new growers do not want to remove blossoms or bloom stalks because they are afraid the plant will not bloom again.



AVSA's 68th Convention in Nashville: Table Assignments

For those of you wanting to sit together at the three main meals,
your registrations must come in the same envelope.

No seating assignments will be accepted after the early cut off date.

There will be NO EXCEPTIONS.



Call Me Friend

Exhibited by:

Dale Parker

Hybridized by:

J. Domiano

Large

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Inner Orbit

Exhibited by:

Lindi Wurzer

Hybridized by:

R. Robinson

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

Two African Violets from Russian Hybridizer Natalya Skornyakova



RM-Alexandria
Standard



RM-Royal Laces
Standard

2014 AVSA Convention Awards

Nashville, TN

Specified Awards - Amateur Division

Best Holtkamp Collection - \$300, rosette & coin - Holtkamp Greenhouses

2nd Best Holtkamp Collection - \$200 & rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses

3rd Best Holtkamp Collection - \$100 & rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses

Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection - \$500 - Vladimir Kalgin

2nd Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection - \$200 - Vladimir Kalgin

3rd Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection - \$100 - Vladimir Kalgin

Best Robinson Collection - \$200 - The Violet Barn (\$50 gift certificate for a standard collection)

2nd Best Robinson Collection - \$100 - The Violet Barn

Best Lyndon Lyon Collection - \$200 - Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses - Paul Sorano

2nd Best Lyndon Lyon Collection - \$100 - Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses - Paul Sorano

Best African Violet in Show - \$25 & Silver Memorial for Elmer & Fannie Hall - Ovella Hall (AR)

Best Standard Trailer — \$25—Nashville African Violet Club (TN)

Best Vintage African Violet — \$25 - Janet Riemer (NJ)

Best Streptocarpus - \$25 - Diane Buck (TX)

Specific Variety Awards - Amateur Horticulture

Best 'Buckeye Colossal' - \$100 - Pat Hancock (OH)

Best 'Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler' - \$100 - AVS of Dayton (OH)

Best 'Concord' - \$100 - Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)

Best 'Denny Boo' - \$25 - Mary Corondan (TX)

Best 'Everdina' - \$50 - Hans Inpijn (CA)

Best 'Hans' Pink Surprise' - \$50 - Hans Inpijn (CA)

Best 'Jersey Snow Flakes' — \$25 - Robert Kurzynski (NJ)

Best 'Lonestar Helen Mahr' - \$25 - Richard & Anne Nicholas (TX)

Best 'Lonestar Twilight' - \$25 - Richard & Anne Nicholas (TX)

Best 'Optimara Ontario' - \$25 - Michigan State AV Society (MI)

Best 'Ozio' - \$25 - Mary Corondan (TX)

Best 'Rodeo Country' - \$75 - Spring Branch African Violet Club (TX)

Best 'Texas Space Dust' - \$25 - Mary Corondan (TX)

Best 'The Alps' - \$100 - Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)

Best 'Ozark' Sinningia - \$35 - David Hanis (MO)

Specified Awards - Commercial Division

Best Holtkamp Collection - \$300 & Rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses

2nd Best Holtkamp Collection - \$200 & rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses

3rd Best Holtkamp Collection - \$100 & rosette - Holtkamp Greenhouses

Other Awards - Undesignated - Commercial

\$25 - Kathy Lahti (MN)

Other Awards - Undesignated - Design

\$20 - Metropolitan St. Louis AV Council (MO)

\$25 - Karyn Cichocki (NJ) in memory of Kay Rotando

\$25 - Janet Riemer (NJ)

Other Awards - Undesignated - Horticulture

\$15 - Nancy Amelung (MO)

\$20 - Metropolitan St. Louis AV Council (MO)

\$50 - Janet Riemer (NJ)

\$50 - AV Society of Minnesota (MN)

\$50 - Richard & Anne Nicholas (TX)

Other Awards - Undesignated

\$10 – Susan Storey (TX)
\$20 – Old Dominion AV Society (VA)
\$25 – Ron & Jan Davidson (TX)
\$25 – Delaware AV Society (DE)
\$25 – Mary Corondan (TX)
\$25 – First Austin AV Society (TX)
\$25 – Albuquerque AV Club (NM)
\$25 – Kathy Lahti (MN)
\$25 – Tristate AV Council (NJ)
\$25 – Claire Ulanoff (TN)
\$25 – Leonard Re (CA)
\$25 – AV Council of So. California (CA)
\$25 – Tustana African Violet Society (CA)
\$25 – South Coast AV Society (CA)
\$25 – Betty Ferguson (AR)
\$50 – John & Judy Carter (OK)
\$50 – Linda & Albert Hall (MO)
\$50 – Tidewater AV Society (VA)
\$50 – Randy & Carla Deutsch (SD)
\$50 – AV Society of Minnesota (MN)
\$50 – Judith Neumann (MN)
\$50 – Tampa African Violet Society (FL)
\$50 – Bloomin' Violets & Gesneriads of Palm Beach (FL)
\$50 – African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa (OK)
\$50 – AV Council of Southern California (CA)
\$50 – First Austin AV Society (TX)
\$50 – Central Texas Judges' Council (TX)

\$50 – Gary & Rhona Thurman (TX)
\$75 – First Nighter AV Society (TX)
\$75 – Edna & Al Rourke (CT)
\$100 – Bill Foster (TX)
\$100 – Marjorie Bullard (TX)
\$100 – Missouri Valley AV Council
\$100 – Dr. Bill Price (Canada)
\$100 – Winston & Laurel Goretsky (Canada)
\$100 – Tucson African Violet Society (AZ)
\$100 – Ohio State AV Society (OH)
\$100 – Hans Inpijn (CA)
\$200 – Lone Star African Violet Council (TX)

Thanks to the many individuals, clubs, and councils who have offered their generous award support for the 2014 AVSA show in Nashville! It is your generosity that makes our show so special.

If your name is not on this list, there is still time to be included in the the souvenir convention book. Send your check or money order payable in U.S. funds and made out to 'AVSA' to:

**Judith Carter,
AVSA Awards Chair**

1825 W. Lincoln St.
Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

We look forward to hearing from you! Final deadline to be listed in the Nashville Show Souvenir Book is April 15, 2014.

Space requirements limited our list in this issue, so please view a current Awards listing, including the Society awards, on the AVSA web site at www.avsa.org under National Convention. Although every attempt has been made to list awards correctly, we reserve the right to modify or change these listings.



Temperature Regulation in Growing African Violets

There's More to the Story and Why Chimeras are Affected

by Neil Lipson

When I finished my African Violet room back in February of this year, I wrote an article discussing how to control the temperature. Well, it turned out that the temp controls on the heater had huge fluctuations with it ranging from 64 degrees to 88! I then proceeded to purchase two more heaters, both of them with the same problem. During the summer, the AC kept the room under 82, but once winter came back, it was time to solve this once and for all. The straw that broke the camel's back is when I had the heater's thermostat set for 68 and the next day I walked in and it was 88 degrees, with the heater running full tilt.

The problem stems from the fact that even expensive heaters have very poor thermostats in them. After the third heater, which cost \$60, had the same problem, I fell back on my engineering background to find a better way. I searched on the internet for a third party thermostat to turn a heater on and off, independent of the heater itself. The description I was looking for was an "inline thermostat" that the heater would be plugged into. Another name was an "outlet thermostat." After checking on Amazon, one popped up that had good ratings: the Lux Smart Temp Win100 made by Lux Products at www.luxproducts.com.

After getting one to me as fast as possible, I found a heater that I had laying around that was not a digital model. In other words, when the Lux thermostat called for heat, it turned on

the electricity and the heater came on, without a need to push any buttons on the heater. The heater I used had three settings, and I set it on the lowest setting to keep the current low until I could see if that got the heat up to a particular reading.

The Lux can handle 15 amps, but I recommend using any heater lower than the 15 amp setting. Fifteen amps at 120V is 1800 watts, but most 120V heaters are rarely that high, and I didn't want to stress the breakers or wiring anywhere near to that. My heater on the low setting was closer to 700 watts, and that was more than enough to get the room up to 67 degrees at night. The first thing you should do is read the tiny print on the heater label to make sure it is less than 1800 watts and, also, make sure you are plugging it into an outlet with a 20 amp fuse or breaker on the circuit. Keep in mind that the National Electric Code has a 20% safety factor, so you should not exceed 16 amps on a 20 amp circuit.

For the temperature setting, I would set the Lux to 66 at the lowest – or higher – depending on how important it is to keep your electric bill down. At 66 there may be a few degrees of difference in the average temperature. There is also an "offset" adjustment which corrects the temperature to match the actual temperature. Use a good quality thermometer and check the temperature both at the top AND bottom of the growing area, especially if you have a floral cart. Take time to read the instructions on this, which is where I usually get lazy. (Do what I say, not what I do.) Track the temperature with the AcuRite

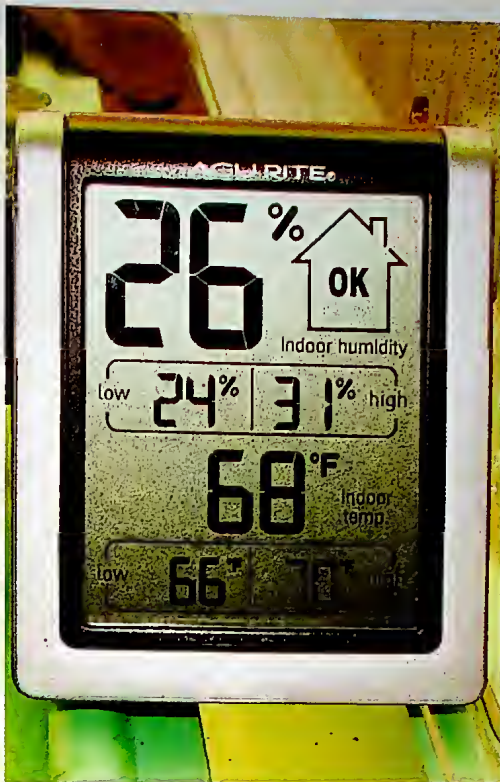


613 Indoor Humidity Monitor which is about \$12 on Amazon. See the photo shown.

I have one further tip for getting the Lux Smart Temp to be even more accurate. If you have an outside wall, do not plug it directly on that wall. If there are no other receptacles, put a 15A short extension cord in the receptacle and plug the Lux into that, a foot or two away from the wall. The colder temps directly on the wall will throw off the Lux, and you may not have consistent temps because of this. By keeping it a little away from the wall, you will have more stability. The thermometer on the Lux is like a pigtail, and it should be pulled up so it measures the air temperature. Look at the photograph enclosed.

What is the optimum temperature range for growing African Violets? My personal feeling is that for standards that do not include chimeras or fantasies, it is 60 - 80 degrees F. I have a fan blowing on the top shelf to minimize stratification, which is where the hot air rises to the top of the room and the cold falls to the bottom. You can have a 10 degree or more difference with this differential. However, you can use this to your advantage. If the room reaches 80 degrees at the top during the summer, but you want cooler plants to bloom properly, you can simply place them on the bottom shelf. I move plants around all the time when growing to show, as some bloom too early and others are blooming late. Placing the plants at the higher temps can cause a plant to bloom faster, so this method is used to fine tune the blooming process.

Also, you want to check the temps if you use a dome with the sliders closed, such as the indoor-gardening supply dome that really keeps moisture and air inside the domed tray. Put the thermometer inside the dome to see the difference between



the inside of the dome and the room. You may be surprised at the difference. You can adjust the sliders to also regulate both the temperature and the humidity this way.

My friends Jeannie Myers and Paula Bal use a sheet of clear plastic to assist in this regulation process. There are many creative ways of adjusting the growing environment, and none of them are expensive at all. Your imagination is your only limitation.

Now, why the need for temperature this accurate? One example is the chimeras. I had long suspected that chimeras were temperature sensitive;

however, I didn't realize how sensitive until all nine of my Carnation Sprinkles reverted during the summer. And when the temperature dropped down, they did not come back.

For many years I wondered why many people who grew Concord still had the wide white stripe instead of the thin one, which was happening to plants grown by many of us. I then heard from Chris Nagy that he was able to keep the wide white stripe intact by growing Concord in a cooler environment.

I then heard from Dr. Rachel Martin, an associate professor at UC Irvine, who told me, when asked if different temperatures affect chimeras: "That seems likely to me. Because a chimera has two genetically different types of cells growing together, if one is more heat-sensitive than the other, the growth of that cell type could be suppressed by the high temperatures." Her comment made perfect sense to me and explained quite a lot. It was not based on research, mind you, but on her intuitive knowledge of violets which indicated that this could very well be the case.

Also, on an AV forum I got this response from Kathy Hajner, an AV hybridizer: "On the flipside,

my K's Kiwiberry, which is not a chimera, sent up two peduncles (when the weather started cooling off) that had pinwheel flowers...purple with green stripes. It has since gone back to normal flowers. That was the first time I'd seen that on my plants."

In my 25 years of growing chimeras, I have found the following plants to revert in warm weather:

Concord
Suncoast Peppermint Kathy
Sugar N' Spice
Carnation Sprinkles
Red Mt. Fuji
Titanic
Victorian Flirt

When this happens, they rarely come back, so this is an important reversion for me to avoid, given that I grow dozens of rare chimeras.

The reason I am emphasizing this regulation of temperature is that, with all of my growing, I try to

minimize the variables. I mention this point in many of my articles, but you will have enough problems keeping your environment stable, without adding temperature problems. Some of these variables are pH, soil, water quality, lighting levels and hours used, pot size, fertilizer, and other factors. Experienced growers have a sixth sense about this, and they make adjustments without even thinking about it. Take your time learning all this, and be sure to read past articles in AVM which are a valuable resource for years to come.

I would like to thank Jeannie Myers for her help in editing this article. Her assistance in proofing my writings has been invaluable to me.

Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant and vice-president of the African Violet Society of Springfield. He can be reached by emailing him at ndlipson@gmail.com or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. He will return your call.

Controlling the Amount of Variegation

By Kent and Joyce Stork

From their book *You Can Grow African Violets*

Ideally, a variegated violet should have enough interesting markings to please the eye, while sustaining enough green to support growth. The trick for the grower is to recognize when a plant has reached that balance and to master the art of encouraging and discouraging variegation to maintain that balance.

One way to control variegation is to control the temperatures at which the plants are grown. Most variegated hybrids will keep a good balance of color when grown at 72° F. Growing them warmer usually produces a greater percentage of green, and growing them cooler produces more variegation. If you live in an area with cold winter temperatures, you will probably need to place variegated plants up on higher shelves where the air tends to be warmer. If you must live with extremely warm summer temperatures, you will probably find that the plants show better variegation when kept on lower shelves where the air is somewhat cooler.

Another way to control variegation is through fertilizing. Some growers prefer to use fertilizers

with very little nitrogen (5-50-17 is one formulation that is specifically recommended for variegates). This may be of use in areas where temperatures are so warm that the soil bacteria are able to produce all the nitrates needed just using available air. In cooler areas, this formulation may cause plants to become too variegated and thus weak.

Plants that are showing too much variegation (especially in cool areas) may have bacteria which are too inactive to process nitrogen efficiently. Foliar feeding (a process of spraying nutrients directly onto the foliage) can be used to add nitrogen to the leaf cells. This results in increased production of chlorophyll and greener leaves. Most fertilizers can be applied in this way, but our favorite is to use fish emulsion (at a rate of about one-sixteenth teaspoon to a quart of very warm water. Apply this by misting the surface of the leaves thoroughly. Keep them out of direct sunlight while the leaves are wet. A drop of dishwashing liquid can be added to reduce spotting on the leaves.

The AVSA Library Complete List of Rentals can now be found on the AVSA Web Site. www.AVSA.org

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Please Note: Deadlines - Articles and Columnists: Jan. issue - Oct. 1; Mar. issue - Dec. 1; May issue - Feb. 1; July issue - Apr. 1; Sept. issue - June 1; Nov. issue - Aug. 1.

COMING EVENTS: Send to Editor.

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3rd Best African Violet In Show

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Hybridized by: **H. Pittman**

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By John T. Carter, President

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

As I write this, we have just started a new year. Winter weather is sweeping the country leaving snow, ice, and power outages. These are things that do not make our violets happy. Even though they are houseplants, and growing in a controlled environment, they seem to know what is going on outside and will not do their best. If you have extra time inside due to the weather, spend some time with your violets. They will appreciate it.

Convention registration is well under way now. Nashville will be a great convention and is within a day's drive for over half the population of the country and should be for our members also. There is a big interest in seeing the Holtkamp greenhouses, so if you don't have your registrations in, you need to do so quickly if you want to take one of those tours.

We now have a contract for the 2015 convention. It will be at the Holiday Inn/KCI Exposition Center located near the Kansas City airport. I visited the location and can tell you we will have plenty of room for all of our activities. We were able to keep a good rate for the hotel rooms and meal cost. The location will be very easy to reach either driving or flying. It will be May 24th through May 31st, 2015, so put that on your calendar now.

I feel great progress is continuing on the website. You now have access to all of the photos that have ever been on the website. It is in the neighborhood of 3000 photos, I am told. The commit-

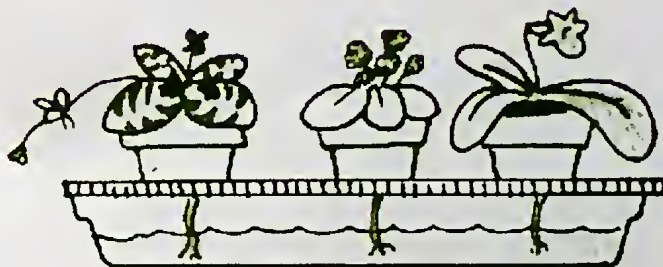


tee is developing procedures to add new photos. The index to all 67 years of the AVM is back on the website, and you have several search options to help you find what you are looking for. Remember that you can purchase copies of back issues from the AVSA office. They can be ordered from the website and will be sent to you quickly. An index of the photos has been started and will be expanded as the information is gathered.

I would guess that the majority of the members reading this are not on Facebook nor ever intend to be. I will admit that it is not for everyone, but there have been a number of interest groups formed relating to violets and gesneriads. I do not know the age of these participants, but I believe that the majority are what most of us consider as "younger." I see a lot of sharing and encouraging exchanges that appear to be educating new violet hobbyists. I am sure a number have joined AVSA based upon recommendations from some of our members. AVSA has a Facebook page, and information is posted there as a means of informing our members and the public of information we should be aware of. If you do join the Facebook form of media, be sure to "like" the AVSA Facebook page. You can link to it from the bottom of the home page on our website.

Show time is coming; it is time to start grooming!

John



Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

Here is the updated email address to reach our AVSA Show Schedule Approver, Meredith Hall:

<m.hall@reagen.com>.

This information is usually on the inside front cover of this magazine. We usually print several covers at the same time, as a cost-cutting effort, but the address change was made after that.

The tours to the **Holtkamp Greenhouses** in Nashville have stirred up a lot of excitement. The tours are scheduled for two on Monday, May 26, and two on Tuesday, May 27. Each tour is for 50 guests. The Holtkamps have waived the tour price for AVSA members, and the tour guide is **Russell Kirchner**. I'm sure many of you remember Russell from last year's convention when he invited us all to come to Nashville.

A while back, my friend, Neil Lipson, ran an idea by me – something I had never heard discussed in the AV world before: using Infrared Photography to diagnose diseases in African violets. You will want to read Neil's *Technically Speaking...or Not*, column on page 44. Often, the new ideas or tools we hear about are essentially out of many grower's financial reach. I like the way Neal offers economic solutions for those of us unwilling, or unable, to go the more high-cost route.

This winter seemed endless! Our winters are usually mild, so much so that many annuals in my front flowerbed reappear every year. Not so this year. Everything is dead and brown, except the rose bushes, which were hybridized in 1864. In my office, I had to move my plants from the wide, north-facing windowsills, onto an old



teacart and a couple of tall, sturdy cardboard boxes. I am happy to report that my plant of 'Radar's Ruthie,' hybridized by Ray Pittman, is doing very well!

On page 56, you will find information that appears in the *AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges*, (commonly referred to as the Judges' Handbook.)

I received an email from one of our members, telling me that she was having trouble keeping up with the terminology used in some of our AVM columns. She asked if there was something that could appear in the AVM, breaking down the terms for the parts of an African violet plant, that could be used as an easy reference. I combined two pages from the Handbook, "The African Violet Plant and its Parts." One is a reference, and the other contains the black and white drawings of the plant parts, labeled to make reference easy.

Cheryl Salatino has written articles on numerous topics throughout the many years I have been Editor. She has also co-authored the *For Beginners* column for many years. In this issue, on pages 28 and 29 you will find Cheryl's last *For Beginners* column addressing "Spots, Marks, and Freckles." Thank you so much, Cheryl, for all the information you shared with our new, and experienced members.

Editor's Note: Some of the donations appearing in the Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund (page 31) were earlier left out of a previous column due to editorial error.

Ruth

When You Come to Nashville

By Russell Kirchner

When you are in Nashville, you'll want to be a tourist. There is so much to see and do in Music City, USA! After settling in, you'll want to head downtown. The Country Music Hall of Fame is downtown and The Hard Rock is down by the riverfront. For a more upscale art venue, visit the Frist Art Museum. Located near downtown, it is filled with elegant art displays. American Pickers has Antique Archaeology on Clinton Street, if that entices, but if you really want to "thrift store" it up, talk to me, I know where the gems truly are. This is Capital City; there is a lot to see.

We have a really nice Farmers Market, with year-round vendors, and a smorgasbord of ethnic food restaurants inside the center market.

Military Museums and Memorials are downtown. History is plentiful in Nashville. You will want to visit President Andrew Jackson's Hermitage plantation, filled with history. This area has a lot of Civil War history to share, and if you are interested, there is even more in Franklin, TN.

The full-sized replica of the Parthenon down on West End Ave., south of town, is a sight to behold. We don't call it "the Athens of the South" for nothing. This replica was built to impress those visiting the Centennial Expo in 1897; it is a 'must see.' A little farther out of the center of town is Cheekwood Botanical Garden.

Another important stop is the original Ryman Auditorium on 5th Ave., downtown. But one

place you won't want to miss is the world-famous Grand Ole Opry, which is very close to the hotel. (The Opry Mills Mall is there too, for you shoppers...). There's also an Imax theater, Bass Pro Shop, and Dave 'n Busters.

I am not going to mention food, just know - we have it all. The locals call it "meat and three."

Outside of Nashville locations include Elvis's Graceland in Memphis; if you have never given respect to the King, you should see Graceland. Lynchburg for Jack Daniels, surprisingly... in a dry county.

The Smoky Mountains are to the east, in Gatlinburg, a super fun place. So how about that? Nashville is fun! This AVSA Convention will be fun.

Some of my favorite places are close to the hotel. Go across the river and down Broad Street. The music-filled honky tonks are plentiful. I am a transplanted local, and I go to a place called Roberts. In my opinion, it is by far the best! (Where else can you get a hotdog, bag of chips, and a beer for \$5?) And if you want to see a lot of "For Sale" guitars, be sure to visit Gruin Guitars, located at 2120 8th Ave. S., a short drive south of downtown.

Come early and tour the Optimara violet factory/greenhouse. Email me with any questions: russell@optimara.com. See you in Nashville!

AVSA's 68th National Convention

'Violet Pickin' in Tennessee'

Nashville, TN

May 25th - June 1, 2014

For Complete Convention Information

Visit AVSA's Website: www.avsa.org

January 1, 2014

For those of you wanting to sit together at the three main meals, your registrations must be sent in the SAME ENVELOPE. No seating assignments will be accepted after the early cut off date. There will be **NO EXCEPTIONS!!**

In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

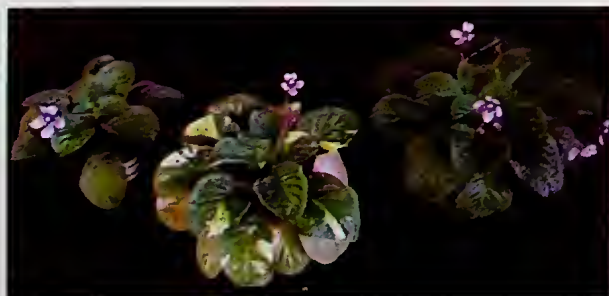
Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

Well, it has happened again. After having no reports of variegated foliage in the species *Saintpaulia* plants for many years, we now have a third report. The plant in question originated as a leaf cutting of the plant formerly known as *S. grandifolia* #257. Under our current registration system, this plant would be *S. ionantha* variety *ionantha* clone *grandifolia* 257; or using the registration numbers: *S. 5a*.



cl. *grandifolia* 257. The leaf cutting was from Pamela Orris from the state of Delaware to her sister Paula Spisak in West Virginia. Three babies were produced from the leaf cutting. Two were normal, but one has a nice amount of random variegation in the leaves. This is similar to the variegation reported in the *S. rupicola* mutation recently reported from Australia.

Unlike the variegated *S. rupicola* mutation, the variegated *S. 5a* cl. *grandifolia* 257 will be difficult to propagate. This clone normally grows as a single crown plant unlike *S. rupicola*. Variegated babies could be produced by suckers if the apical meristem or crown is removed, but you can hardly blame someone for not wanting to take that risk and accidentally destroying the plant. Leaf



cuttings from random variegated plants rarely produce variegated offspring. *S. 5a* cl. *grandifolia* 257 is a great plant to grow in your species collection, and it would be wonderful if the variegated form could be successfully propagated.

Q: If a plant is self-pollinated, won't most of the offspring look just like the parent?

A: The answer to this question is a qualified "maybe". It does stand to reason that if a single plant is both the female parent and male parent to the offspring, the traits will be reinforced, and the offspring will look very similar to the parent. Many people who have grown out a self-pollinated seed pod have had these results. However, African violets often carry hidden recessive traits that are not expressed in the parent. During a self-pollination, the recessive traits have a 25% chance of combining together and being expressed in the offspring. There isn't a way to tell from just looking at a plant if it carries hidden recessive traits, but many African violets do.

What often happens when a hybridizer grows out the seeds from a self-pollination is that they have a limited amount of space and only grow out a small number of seedlings. Since the chance of a hidden recessive is only 25%, they may miss these plants that are unlike the parent. Therefore, if you are growing out seeds from a self-pollination and want to find something "new" or "different" in the seedlings, be sure to grow out a large number of seedlings.

Q: Can mosaic variegation become different when these plants are reproduced by leaf cuttings?

A: Yes, mosaic variegated plants can sometimes not come true to type through leaf cuttings. This is because the mutant chloroplasts that cause the variegation may have a slightly different dis-

tribution pattern or number in the cell that starts the new plantlet. I've seen some examples of plantlets that were solid green and others that increased in variegation. The incidence of changed plants is fairly low. At a guess, I'd say that mosaic plants produce babies at a much higher rate of true to type than do suckers from some chimera plants.

Hybridizers sometimes use this to their advantage. If they have a mosaic variegated seedling with good blooms and growth form, but low amounts of variegation, they can sometimes put down many leaves and get one plantlet that has an increase in the variegation. Subjecting the rooting leaves to stress such as high light, high fertilizer or high temperature seems to up the odds a little bit for getting a plantlet with higher variegation. In this way, a hybridizer can sometimes obtain a nice new seedling with improved variegation without having to do further hybridizing.

Q: I've read about a technique of fusing cells together from two different plants to create artificial hybrids. Since African violets are so closely related to African Primroses or Streptocarpus, could this technique be used to create Streps with African violet flower characteristics?

A: I recently came across a scientific journal article that attempted something very similar to what you described. The study used enzymes to strip off the cell walls of African violet and *Streptocarpus* plants. The naked cells are called protoplasts. The study was successful in getting the protoplasts to fuse, but were unable to regenerate any plants back from the new hybrid cells. The study expressed surprise at this result, as this

technique has worked with other plants. In my mind, this is further evidence that African violets and *Streptocarpus* should remain as separate plant genera and not merged together as was suggested about a year ago in another publication.

Q: Can the trait of chimera leaves be inherited?

A: Chimera leaves are a type of leaf variegation such as that found in Rob's Lucky Ducky, Rob's Lucky Penny, or Rob's Lucky Number. This variegation type is more stable in different temperatures than is the Tommie Lou or Crown Variegated foliage types. However, I suspect that like chimera flowers, the chimera foliage is a "lucky" accident and can't be hybridized for. Generally, these plants are produced only through suckers, not leaf cuttings, just like the chimera flowers.

Q: What is a "bucket" and can it be inherited?

A: Most growers refer to a "bucket" as a new plantlet that forms on a bloom stalk. Rather than having a pair of bracts or small leaves on each side of the bloom stalk, the plant actually develops a full new little plant. The effect is similar to a runner on a strawberry plant or an airplane plant where there is a stem with a little plant at the end. The bucket can be removed and rooted. In my experience, some of the older cultivars were prone to forming buckets more so than modern cultivars. There seems to be a genetic component to the trait, as leaf cuttings of cultivars which produced buckets would continue to sometimes form them, but I don't know if the trait would be a dominant or recessive and transmitted sexually to offspring.

AVSA's 68th Convention in Nashville: Table Assignments

For those of you wanting to sit together at the three main meals, your registrations must come in the same envelope.

No seating assignments will be accepted after the early cut off date.

There will be **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Question Box

By Sue Haffner

3015 Timmy Ave. • Clovis, CA 93612

Email: sueh@csufresno.edu • haff.sue2@gmail.com

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your violets are doing well and that you are busily engaged in African violet doings: shows, meetings, etc. Have you explored buying plants from a new vendor this year? The ads in the *African Violet Magazine* are so tempting, aren't they? Check out the offerings. It's always fun to add new varieties to our collections. As always, be sure to isolate the new ones for at least a few weeks before integrating them.

Q. Do you know what "mossing off" is? A speaker at our garden club mentioned this (I believe it's a method of propagation), but I'd never heard of it before.

A. Actually, no, I hadn't encountered this expression before, but a bit of online exploring brought an answer. It seems to be a regional term for the practice of air layering. Both references I found referred to growers in Florida. So, my guess is that this is a term used there, or in the southeast U.S. (If any readers know otherwise, please let me know.) If you've perused general gardening books you've read discussions of air layering, especially with regard to woody plants or other difficult to root varieties. Briefly, it involves wounding the stem by cutting away the bark to expose the cambium layer, wrapping the cut area in damp sphagnum moss, and enclosing the moss in plastic film to encourage roots to grow. Once roots have formed, the stem can be cut below the moss ball and the plant potted up, kept in a humid environment and—with luck—it will grow. Again, this technique is used for hard-to-propagate plants. I've never done it, myself. However, the *African violet magazine* contained an article by Sharon Rosenzweig, "Air layering your leggy African violets," in



the May-June 2013 issue. Her argument is that this technique will reduce the risk of losing the plant and that you will have new growth and flowers sooner. It sounds interesting. Certainly the chances of success with easily propagated plants like violets would be much less iffy than with more difficult plants. Go read the article; this might be worth a try with your plants.

Q. I brought a plant home from the office, a Parlor palm, and I had it in my plant room. It was on the windowsill right by my African violet stand. I hadn't paid a lot of attention to it when, after a few months, I noticed that it was covered with scale. Yuck! I took it outside and sprayed it with Windex™ (recommended by someone in the office) and now it's been exiled to a corner of the porch, away from other plants. Do you think the scale could have spread to the violets? I've checked them and don't think I see any. Would it hurt them if I sprayed them with Windex™, just as a precaution?

A. Scale infestation can be a messy situation to clean up. Established scale insects excrete a sap, sometimes called "honeydew" that, if left untreated, can lead to a sooty sort of fungus growth. I trust you haven't seen that, otherwise you would have mentioned it. I was told years ago that just about anything could be used against scale; soapy water is recommended or removing the bugs by hand. Still, scale isn't considered a major pest of violets. They seem to prefer more woody type plants, where they can attach themselves to trunks and other firm surfaces (they also don't seem to care for plants with hairy leaves.) To answer your last question, I hadn't heard of Windex™ being used on plants. This familiar glass and hard-surface cleaner has been manufactured since 1933. It

has undergone various formulations over the years, usually involving certain percentages of isopropyl alcohol, a surfactant, a water softener, and a small amount of ammonia. For many years, it contained a blue dye. I just checked the bottle under my sink, to find that it is colorless (the label says "with vinegar".) I wouldn't recommend that you use it on violets. It sounds a bit too harsh. Remember to be careful when using commercial products for purposes not intended by the manufacturer. Just keep an eye on your plants. By the way, how is the palm? Did the spray work? (As an aside: when researching the product online, I saw a puzzling reference, "Windex drink". I thought: What? It turns out to be a mixed drink of vodka, triple sec and blue Curacao. Bartenders call it "Windex" because of the color.)

Q. Another grower in my club said we should double-pot our violets in order to help them develop into good show plants. She didn't give a demonstration, so I don't really know what she meant by that. Can you help?

A. "Double potting" does mean something to me, but not directly relating to African violets. To me, it's always been a means of protecting your outside plants from heat damage by insulating their roots. In the instance that I am familiar with, your plant, in a clay pot, is then planted, pot and all, into a larger pot with a layer of soil mix tamped down into the space between the pots, somewhat like insulation. In a climate of very hot summers, this is useful to protect plants that are in direct sun. But this isn't what "double potting" means for violets. Just recently I've heard of employing double-potting as an ad hoc arrangement if you don't have support rings for violet foliage. Here's what you do: place your violet, pot and all, into a larger pot so that the rim of the larger pot provides leaf support. Now, as the larger pot is likely to be deeper than the pot your plant is in, you will probably need to set your inner plant on something to lift it up to the proper height. It sounds like a relatively simple thing to do. I guess if you wick your plants you might not be able to maintain the reservoir inside the bigger pot, but maybe you could use a

smaller reservoir, temporarily, at least. Supporting the foliage as a violet grows is a means of producing a nice symmetrical show plant. As the leaves are splayed out to where you can easily see their formation, you can work to move them into a more symmetrical shape. I suspect this is what your speaker meant. There are other ways of achieving this. You could make your own leaf rings out of paper plates or circles of cardboard. That way you could still keep the plants on their usual wick reservoirs.

Q. Is leaching really that important? I used to do it when I only had a few violets, but I have to confess that it got to where I was doing it very seldom. I know it means that I'm a lazy grower. Is it really all that beneficial for your plants?

A. Leaching is just simply pouring fresh water through the root systems of your violets until it runs freely through the drainage holes of the pot. It is usually recommended that you do this every four to six weeks, or so. Simple, yes, but there's no denying that it can be laborious, especially if you have a lot of plants. It is a means of washing out of the potting mix any accumulated fertilizer buildup, water impurities, or any other undesirable contents. This is particularly useful if you don't repot very often or if your tap water is high in mineral salts. I've heard that some growers can even smell when it's time to do this, as the pots give off an ammonia odor. (I would say that would be time to repot!) Anyway, there is little doubt that leaching can be a beneficial act, as it not only flushes out chemical buildup but it also gives the grower the opportunity to pick up the plant and take a close look at it. Take the time to wash and clean the pot; add potting mix to the top of the soil if it has gotten a bit low. Clean away any accumulated fertilizer salts from around the rim and/or drainage holes. Clean the plant leaves, too. If you have a lot of plants, you could do them in batches—one shelf one day, another shelf another day, for instance. For small plants, you might set a piece of grid ("egg crating") over a 5 gallon bucket and place the small pots on it to be dealt with together. One thing about leaching: be sure to let the pots drain

thoroughly before you set them back on their reservoirs.

Q. A family friend is going to be relocating from the Pacific Northwest down to southern California soon. She has a few violets that she intends to bring with her. They have sentimental value to her, and she wants to make sure they survive the move. What advice can you offer?

A. I think the change in tap water is likely to be the biggest factor in how her violets react to the change. Of course, this is assuming that the plants manage the trip itself. If the move occurs during good weather, there shouldn't be a problem, especially as we seem to be discussing a small collection. The plants will need to be acclimated to their

new home; light will be a factor. I don't know if the lady grows under lights or on a windowsill, so she will have to try to find a similar environment. She should keep a close watch on the plants for a while to see how they are growing. If she notices that the plants aren't performing as they should, she will have to do some experimenting. If there is a local violet club, she might try to get in touch with them for advice. If possible, she might try to find out about the tap water in advance; some water departments have their water quality assessments available online. (Now, I know that moving is usually a stressful operation and that, unless you are a real plant nut, your houseplants are not going to be your number one concern, so the above suggestions are offered as general advice.)



Fluorescent Lighting

By Joyce Stork

My first light unit was a 4-foot shop fixture (purchased at a discount store) which had two 48 inch fluorescent tubes, was made of metal, and hung on two chains from an old sheet of plywood that was held up by 2 stacks of cement blocks. The total investment (a few years ago) was less than \$10. It won't cost you much more today.

The fluorescent tubes may be simple "cool white" tubes available in almost any lighting department of garden or discount stores. The lowest grade of bulbs will burn out rather quickly. Cool white is the next step up and worth the extra dollar or so. If you want to improve the color of the light a bit (not so blue) and probably get a little more quality growing, use a combination of one cool white and one "Gro-lux wide spectrum" (also pretty easy to find in local stores).

Once you have the metal fixture and the two tubes, you will need to rig a way to hang it so that the tubes are about ten to twelve inches above the foliage of the plants. You can use a stack of bricks, or you might be able to build a

rack using PVC pipe (in the plumbing department) fitting pipes together with elbow joints. Our setup today is built with 2x4 lumber and plywood.. not much fancier than the first rig we built. It needs to be on for just ten to twelve hours a day, so a timer is a good idea. Look in the same lighting department for a timer.

My best guess is that all of this will cost about \$30. If that is far under the budget you had in mind, an excellent supplier online is Indoor Garden Supplies www.indoorgardensupplies.com which sells wonderful light carts and higher quality light fixtures, etc. If nothing else, check out their site just to see specific information on the types of bulbs to buy. One caution: when you first start using brand new light tubes, the light intensity is pretty strong. Run the lights for a shorter day (starting at eight hours) and increasing the day-length by a half an hour each week. When you have to replace a worn-out tube, replace only one tube at a time to avoid bleaching the leaves.

From AVSA's Website FAQ Section

A Family Portrait

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, OH

Email: <melsgrice@earthlink.net

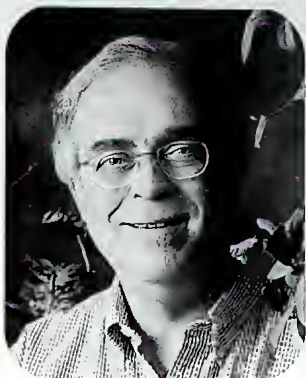
Sinningia 'Kevin Garnett'

Many of you have probably been noticing *Sinningia* 'Kevin Garnett' at recent shows. The medium pink slightly nodding calyx double blooms always attract your attention. Louise Cheung from Toronto, Ontario exhibited a nice specimen of this plant at the Gesneriad Society Convention held in Toronto last summer. It won best in its class of other *Sinningia* hybrids with upright growth pattern. It also received the award for Best Recently Registered Hybrid from the Gesneriad Hybridizer's Association (GHA Award).

Tim Tuttle from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is responsible for hybridizing this excellent plant in September of 2000.

It is a cross between *Sinningia* 'Tropical Twilight' and *Sinningia* 'Playful Porpoise'. It has an upright growth pattern which means that it tends to grow towards the light with spaces between the leaves thus producing a stem. It can be grown flatter if given quite a bit of light — say under T-8 or T-5 lights placed only a few inches above the plant. The leaves are dark green, hairy, and slightly shiny. Tim DID NOT name *Sinningia* 'Kevin Garnett' after the NBA basketball player that some of you might know. Instead, *Sinningia* 'Kevin Garnett' is named for the older of Tim's two nephews who happens to share the same name.

Sinningia 'Kevin Garnett' has pink tubular



flowers with purple spotting and striping in the throat. The calyx double flowers add special interest. The calyces on a typical *Sinningia* are green and form a protective layer around the flower in bud. In this case, the calyx has taken on the color of the flower and makes a second layer around the bloom. Usually when the flower is spent, it will separate from the green calyx and drop

off. Calyx double flowers never separate. They will wither and die and remain on the plant until you cut them off. They make ideal plants for taking to shows since the blooms do not drop off in a bouncing car. If only we could hybridize African

violets to be calyx doubles!

Propagation of *Sinningia* 'Kevin Garnett' is easy by taking crown cuttings. I insert an inch of the crown's stem into my rooting mix — equal parts Pro-Mix, perlite and vermiculite. I first dip the cut end into Clonex® to help the cut end root and form a

tuber. The cutting is placed in its own plastic bag while rooting. Four months later, I should have a well-rooted plant that needs to be repotted into the next size pot so that the new tuber can continue to grow larger.

Tim Tuttle has another nephew named Matt Hudson so be looking for a future article about *Sinningia* 'Matt Hudson' — an equally desirable plant to grow.

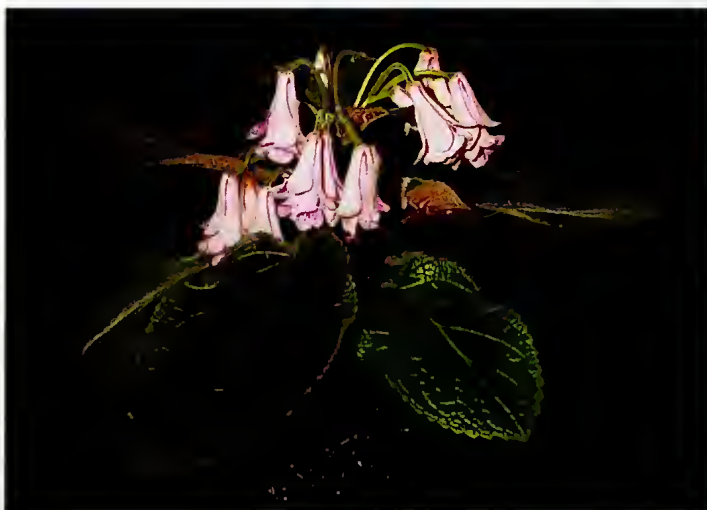


Photo Credit: Julie Mavity-Hudson

Tally Time 2013

www.avsa.org/tallytime

Susan Anderson • 4040 E. Maldonado Dr. • Phoenix, AZ 85042 • tallytime@avsa.org

Tally Time is a summary of the African violet varieties and species receiving the greatest number of awards in judged AVSA Standard Shows throughout the past year. I'm thrilled to see so many winners in the 2013 annual report! The following summarizes results of 59 shows from six geographic regions. Winning plants include many older, tried-and-true varieties and also several newcomers that are capturing our hearts. Consider adding a winning variety to your collection, especially if it has been successful in your region. Please share the joy of violets and AVSA by teaching others about these beautiful plants.

New for 2014! There is now an online submission form on the AVSA website! On the "Member Content" page, affiliates may now enter show results online and save postage. Of course, results may continue to be sent via email or mail to the address above. Thanks to all participating affiliates for their timely submissions of reports and for carefully recording variety names. To have show winners included in the annual summary, please send completed Tally Time forms via online entry, mail or email by November 20th. Keep growing and showing!

	Total Number of Awards	Number Best in Show	Number Second Best	Variety Hybridizer, Registration No.	Number of Collection Awards	Best Standard, Semi, Mini, Trailer or Species
STANDARDS	12	3	0	Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler P. Hancock #8745	5	4
				Frozen in Time		
	12	1	0	Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano #9167	10	1
				Smokey Moon		
	7	2	0	S. Sorano #7597	3	2
	7	1	0	Rhapsodie Rebecca Holtkamp #8351	5	1
SEMIMIINIATURES				Picasso		
	7	0	1	M. Trenblay #6924	5	1
				Harbor Blue		
	6	0	0	T. Weber #6174	5	1
				Ness' Crinkle Blue		
	11	0	1	D. Ness #8136	6	4
				Rob's Fuddy Duddy		
	7	1	1	R. Robinson #7886	2	3
				Irish Flirt		
	6	0	0	S. Sorano #7577	5	1
MINIATURES				Precious Pink		
	5	1	0	H. Pittman #6025	2	2
				Rob's Boogie Woogie		
	5	1	0	R. Robinson #8606	2	2
				Cool Blue		
	5	0	0	H. Pittman #8758	5	0
				Eternal Orbit		
	5	0	0	P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses #10224	3	2
				Rob's Chilly Willy		
	11	1	1	R. Robinson #9461	4	5
TRAILERS				Jolly Orchid		
	8	1	0	H. Pittman #9719	3	4
				Precious Red		
	8	0	0	H. Pittman #9724	2	6
				Optimara Little Moonstone		
	6	0	1	Holtkamp #7352	2	3
				Rob's Jitterbug		
	5	0	0	R. Robinson #8876	3	2
				Pink Dove		
	4	0	0	S. Sorano #8267	1	3
TRAILERS				Windsome		
	4	0	0	H. Pittman #10116	0	4
				Rob's Boolaroo		
	7	1	1	R. Robinson #8053	0	5
				Sweet Amy Sue		
	4	1	1	P. Harris #6896	0	2
				Rob's Willawong		
	4	1	0	R. Robinson #8181	2	1
				Blustery Trail		
	4	0	2	L. Lyon #5015	0	2
TRAILERS				Rob's Lilli Pilli		
	4	0	0	R. Robinson #8063	2	2
				Rob's Wagga Wagga		
	3	0	1	R. Robinson #8071	0	2

SPECIES	11	0	0	S 8 clone <i>rupicola</i>	5	6
	8	0	0	S 5b clone <i>grotei</i>	3	5
	7	0	1	S 5a clone <i>grandifolia</i> No. 237	4	2
	7	0	0	S 5c1 clone <i>tongwensis</i>	1	6
	6	0	0	S 5c1 clone <i>ionantha</i>	4	2
	5	0	1	S 5b clone <i>grotei</i> Silvert	1	3

The following table lists the award winners by geographic region.

Geographic Region: State/Province (Number of Shows)

Region I: Arizona (2), California (5), New Mexico (1)

Region II: Iowa (2), Illinois (1), Minnesota (1), Missouri (4), Nebraska (1), Ohio (4), Wisconsin (2)

Region III: Connecticut (2), Delaware (1), Massachusetts (1), New Jersey (5), New York (6), Pennsylvania (2), Virginia (2)

Region IV: Louisiana (1), Oklahoma (1), Texas (2)

Region V: Alabama (1), Florida (3), Georgia (1), Mississippi (1), North Carolina (1)

Region VI: Alberta (1), Nova Scotia (2), Ontario (3)

	Variety	Total Number of Awards	Geographical Regopms					
			I	II	III	IV	V	VI
STANDARDS	Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler	12		5	6			1
	Frozen in Time	12	1	1	5		2	3
	Smokey Moon	7			1			6
	Rhapsodie Rebecca	7		7				
	Picasso	7	1	1	5			
	Harbor Blue	6	1		4		1	
SEMINIATURES	Ness' Crinkle Blue	11	2	1	2		2	4
	Rob's Fuddy Duddy	7		3	4			
	Irish Flirt	6	2	1	3			
	Precious Pink	5		2	3			
	Rob's Boogie Woogie	5	1	4				
	Cool Blue	5	1	1	2		1	
	Eternal Orbit	5		2	2	1		
MINIATURES	Rob's Chilly Willy	11	1	1	1	3	5	
	Jolly Orchid	8		3		4		1
	Precious Red	8	1	1	5	1		
	Opitmara Little Moonstone	6			3		2	
	Rob's Jitterbug	5			1	3	1	
	Pink Dove	4			2			2
	Windsome	4	2	2				
TRAILERS	Rob's Boolaroo	7		1	3	2	1	
	Sweet Amy Sue	4			4			
	Rob's Willawong	4			3	1		
	Blustery Trail	4						4
	Rob's Lilli Pilli	4		1	1	1		1
	Rob's Wagga Wagga	3	1			2		
SPECIES	S 8 clone <i>rupicola</i>	11	1	3	2	1	2	2
	S 5b clone <i>grotei</i>	8		4	1	2		1
	S 5a clone <i>grandifolia</i> No. 237	7		3	4			
	S 5c1 clone <i>tongwensis</i>	7	1	4			2	
	S 5c1 clone <i>ionantha</i>	6		2	1	1		2
	S 5b clone <i>grotei</i> Silvert	5	1		3	1		
Number of Winners		211	17	54	71	23	19	27
Number of Shows Reported		59	8	15	19	4	7	6

AVSA 2014 NASHVILLE TOURS

NOTE: Please note the minimum number of people needed on each tour. If this number is not met, the tour will be canceled. Tour 5 has a maximum of 150. All other tours have no maximum, just a minimum.



Tour 1: Holtkamp Greenhouses

1a. Monday, May 26,
9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

1b. Monday, May 26,
1 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Tour 2: Holtkamp Greenhouses

2a. Tuesday, May 27, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

2b. Tuesday, May 27, 1 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Holtkamp Greenhouses - This is the tour everybody has wanted to see. Get a guided tour from Optimara's own Russell Kirchner and learn the secrets of large-scale commercial African violet production. There will be two tours daily so that all conventioners are afforded the opportunity to see the greenhouses and how violets are produced from leaf to finished plant. The tour is limited to fifty people per session. The tour price is waived due to the generosity of the Holtkamp family. Please indicate more than one choice of time and day for your tour. Violets will not be available for sale on this tour; however, Holtkamp is expected to have a booth in the AVSA Commercial Sales room.
<http://www.optimara.com>



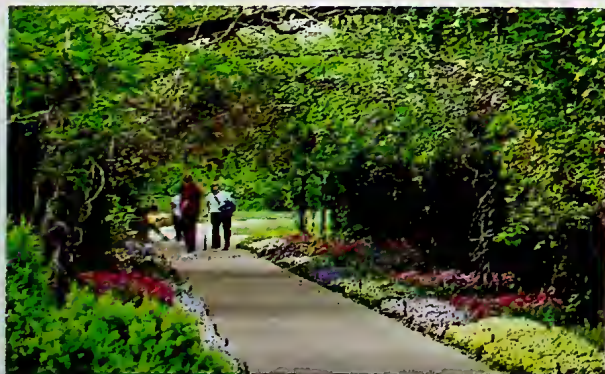
Tour 3: Cheekwood Gardens

Wednesday, May 28, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Tour Cost: \$45.00

Built from the profits of those 10-cent cups of Maxwell House coffee, Cheekwood offers 12 gardens all of different styles. Sprawling over 50 acres, the gardens will be magnificent at this time of year. There is also an art museum on the grounds, housing the art treasures of Nashville for your viewing pleasure.
<http://www.cheekwood.org/About.aspx>

A minimum of 16 is required for this tour.





Tour 4: The Hermitage

Thursday, May 29, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Tour Cost: \$45.00

President Andrew Jackson welcomed many important visitors to his plantation, The Hermitage. Continuing in his tradition, the Hermitage institution provides an enjoyable and authentic experience for all. Take a guided tour of The Hermitage mansion and witness the history behind every room. Experience the majestic beauty of the restored garden where the 7th President and his beloved wife are buried. Explore the 1,100 acres of the fourth most visited presidential home, and Nashville's finest preserved estate. The second floor of the mansion is not wheelchair accessible. This half-day tour will get you back in time for the sales room opening.

<http://www.thehermitage.com/>

A minimum of 16 is required for this tour.



Tour 5: The Grand Ole Opry

Friday, May 30, 5:45 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Tour Cost: \$60.00

You can't say you've visited Nashville without going to the Opry! See the Country music stars of past, present, and future at the famous Ryman Theatre. As many as 10 different acts will perform for your listening pleasure. Only 150 tickets are available for this event, so make your reservations early and take advantage of the AVSA discount. The bus will start boarding at 5:45 P.M. The show starts at 7 P.M. sharp. <http://www.opry.com/about/index.html> There will be 10 handicap accessible seats available on a first come, first serve basis.



No meal[®] is included with this tour. There is a full-service restaurant at the Sheraton City Music Hotel. If there is enough interest in an affordable cost buffet at the Sheraton City Music Hotel, arrangements can be made. Please indicate on your Registration Form if you are interested in a buffet.

Easy, Inexpensive Plant Stakes

By Danny Tidwell

Have you ever been busy potting up babies and run out of stakes to write the name of the plant on? I have many times. You can always write the name on the pot, but if you recycle your pots as I do, that method does not work out too well, and the writing on the pots can be an eyesore on the plant stands. I have used tape or labels with the name written on them, and then put on the pot, but then you have the adhesive residue that is unsightly and all but impossible to remove, again creating an eyesore on the plant stands.

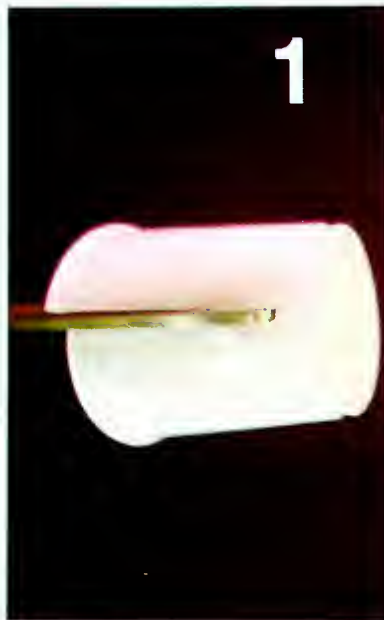
I have a simple, very inexpensive, solution.

Plastic three-ounce solo cups, scissors, and a permanent marker are all that you will need:

From the top lip of the solo cup, cut straight down to the bottom. (Photo #1) There is usually

a raised notch at the bottom of the cup that can be used as a guide to keep a more uniform size. You can make six stakes that are about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch

wide when you use the raised notch as your guide. (Photo #2) I usually cut these six in halves again to make twelve stakes from one solo cup. Then cut these off of the bottom of the cup. (Photo #3) The narrow stakes work well for most African violet names, but for some of the longer-named varieties, such as species, the wider label works better. (Photo #4) I have found that about the only thing that will write on the solo cups is a permanent marker.



These labels are very easy to hide when the plants are going to show; just push the label down into the pot so the top of the stake is even, or just below, the rim of the pot. I usually cut the stakes while watching TV (during commercials of course) so I will have a good supply when it is time to repot plants or pot up those babies for the spring show Sales Table.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Optimara Little Sapphire

From Best Holtkamp Collection/Amateur

Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti

Hybridized by: Holtkamp

Miniature

Violets Down Memory Lane: What's in a Name?

By John Brownlie

jtbrownlie@idirect.com

Everyone who has ever been successful at something owes his or her good fortune to others who have helped him or her along the way. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Muma Kosowan, one of my first mentors, Betty Tapping, my dear friend and competitor, and Sandra Lex who showed us how to grow exceptional show plants. Also, to the sweet memory of Ernest Fisher, a great African violet grower, hybridizer, teacher and a fine gentleman. Last but not least, the memory of my first mentor, Sylvia Richardson (Saalmans), whose encouragement, leadership, and exceptional talents have enriched my life.

Over the years, I have been fascinated by the names hybridizers have chosen for their African violets. It is with this thought in mind that I'd like to tell you of how some of my hybrids came to be named.

The first violets I ever named were hybridized in the late 1970's to honor the Lakeshore AVS. There were five of them, two of which were 'Lakeshore Sweet Sixteen' and 'Lakeshore Midnight.'

Inez Wolfe was a member of our society, and I would greet her at meetings with 'How are you, Inez?' (I-NEZ). She would correct me and say, 'John, my name is pronounced Inez (EYE KNEES).' So on the advice of Eleanor Elston, Inez's good friend, I named a pink double seedling, with a white edge, 'Aca's Eye Knees.' It became a show winner on a number of occasions in both Canada and the United States.

I named another one 'Dear Doris' after my dear wife who has shared our marriage for over 45 years. A lady from the Ukraine came to our house as a violet customer and saw one of my seedlings which was a variegate with white blossoms and a pink blush. She said it reminded her of snowy winter days in the Ukraine. So together we named it 'Ukrainian Winter.'

Many hybridizers name violets to honor individuals. If a surname is used, one must gain permission in writing from that person. A violet grower from Manitoba asked me to name a violet 'Bob Serbin' and Bob, who had moved out to British Columbia, was thrilled to have his name placed on a standard with red blossoms and a Geneva edge. Since then 'Bob Serbin' has had many adventures in the *Saintpaulia* world!

I once named a violet for a racehorse who trained in Toronto. It was a speedy horse and a clever name: 'Tooly McCooly.'

I named a trailer 'Aca's Genuine Jackie,' after Jackie Patterson, a dear friend, who was in the *Gesneriad* and violet business. Jackie, to this day is a loving and 'genuine' lady, and the violet name fits her like a glove.

'Aca's Golden Moment' was my first yellow. It is a double white with a yellow center. 'Golden Spirit' (same description) followed, to honor the spirit of a great friend, Yvon Decelles, who left this world much too early.

Doris and I once saw a sign on a cottage in New York State that said 'Wewonchu' and it reminded me of the pointing Uncle Sam recruiting during the Second World War. Doris and I thought it would make a good violet name so we named a standard two-tone burgundy, 'Aca's Wewonchu.'

One day we were surprised by a visit from a lady from Almaty, Kazakhstan, who was visiting her daughter here. She told us that in her city she was a reporter and belonged to an African violet society, which had been founded long before the Russian African Violet Society. She had heard that we were hybridizers and asked us to name a violet to honor her city, Almaty. We named a variegated standard with double pink blooms, 'Faraway Almaty'.

African violets have been named for many

different reasons, and each one has a story to tell. It is always exciting to come across a new name in a show, the AVSA Master Variety List, a vendor's catalogue, or just on the side of a grower's pot.

(I'd be delighted if other hybridizers would send me the names of interesting varieties they produced

and the story behind their names. My email address is above, and with your permission I'd like to include some in a *Chatter* article.)

From *Chatter*, publication of the African Violet Society of Canada, (AVSC).

Luncheon Auction - It's not too late!

Edna Rourke

Convention and the Auction is just about here. It's not too late to make a donation. We can still use your help to make the auction a success and the best yet.

To our members and affiliates, won't you consider making a donation of a violet-related item or violet related craft item? To our hybridizers and commercial members, donations of supplies or

newly introduced plants or cuttings would be very welcome and most appreciated.

Your help and generous donations insure the success of the auction. Please give me a call at 203-926-9716 or email me at Apapillon@aol.com and let me know what items you will be donating. I'll be looking forward to hearing from you.

See you in Nashville!

NOTICE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO AVSA BYLAWS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the following proposed amendment to AVSA Bylaws Article VI, MEETINGS, will be voted on at the AVSA 2014 Annual Convention at Nashville, TN. The proposed amendment would change the Title by adding "And Communications" and add a new Section 4.

ARTICLE VI

MEETINGS [AND COMMUNICATIONS]

* * * *

Section 4

The AVSA Board of Directors and all committees and subcommittees, whether Standing or Special, and any committees which may hereafter be formed, shall be authorized to meet by telephone conference or through other electronic communications media so long as all the members can simultaneously hear each other and participate during the meeting. Participating members shall announce their name, and the secretary shall record the names of those participat-

ing and confirm that there is a quorum. All votes of the Board or committee members taken at any meeting in which the member participates through means of electronic communication shall be taken by roll call vote.

Rationale:

AVSA's parliamentary authority is Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR). According to RONR 11th Edition, an organization's board or its committees can hold electronic meetings if authorized to do so in the bylaws. Robert's states on page 98 that "electronic meetings should allow for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members, equivalent to those meetings held in one room or area."

Mary Lou Harden, Chair, AVSA Bylaws Committee
Christel H Collier
Sue Ramser
Ruth Goeke
Lynne Wilson
Bob Green

Designed

in



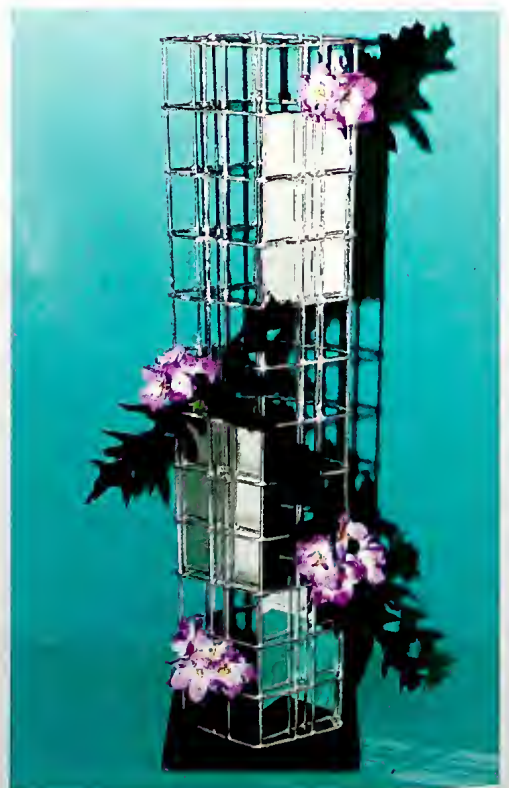
Sanctuary - Fran Russom



Texas Farmer - Fran Russom



Energy - Mel Grice



Steel and Glass - Fran Russom

Texas



Friday Night Lights - Ruth Goeke



Fiesta - Ruth Goeke



County Fair - Betty Ferguson



Rhinestone Cowgirl - Glenda Williams

"And the winners are ..."

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069
Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

AVC OF GREATER KANSAS CITY, MO – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Hot Expectations, Lillian Jarrett Variegated, Psychedelic Show; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Inner Orbit, Eternal Orbit, Jolly Playmate; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Little Miss Muffet; Best Standard: Psychedelic Show; Best Semiminiature: Eternal Orbit; Horticulture Sweepstakes,

Lynn Canning. Best Trailer: Pink Star Lou, **Doris Brown.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Salmon Sunset', **Barbara Taswell-Miller.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Marian Schaaf.**

CAPITAL CITY AVS, CA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Apache Painted Doll, Frozen in Time, Ma's Moody Monday; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Magic, Rob's Boogie Woogie, Irish Luck; Best in Show/Best Standard: Bloom Lover's Prince; Best Semiminiature: Irish Luck; Best Trailer: Vallarta Campanas Moradas; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'KeeWee'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Cindi Nofziger.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Powder Keg, Warm Sunshine, Optical Illusion; Best Miniature: Windsome; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5a clone *grandifolia* #299, **Cindy Eastman.** 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Navajo, Ness' Crinkle Blue, Irish Flirt, **Sam McKenna.** Best Design, **David Wyatt.** Design Sweepstakes, **Kathy Norton.**

AVS OF PHILADELPHIA, PA – Winners: Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Orchard's Wonder Twin, Orchard's Bumble Magnet, Shirl's Hawaiian Lei; Best in Show/Best Standard: Optimara EverPrecious; Best Semiminiature: Jersey Little Devil; Best Miniature: Orchard's Wonder Twin; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Silvert; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Lindi Wurzer.** Best Gesneriad: *Smithiantha* 'Vivian's Charm', **Betsy Branson.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Karen Dirzuweit.**

CEDAR VALLEY AVC, IA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Annabelle, Tatanka,



Rhapsodie Clementine, **Carol Tjaden.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Wooloomooloo, Falling Star, Cirelda; Best Trailer: Cirelda, **Elaine Schnell.** Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Sketch Artist, **Catherine Thompson.** Best Semiminiature: Slow Dancin'; Best Miniature: Optimara Little Moonstone; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5h clone *velutina* Uppsala 1989-5166; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina dryas* 'Hisako'; Best Design, **Jan Tyler-Blanchard.**

DELTA GESNERIAD AND AV SOCIETY, CA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Irish Laughter, Harbor Blue, Optimara Maui; Best in Show/Best Standard: Optimara EverGrace, **June Fallow.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Silvert; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Cindy Eastman.** Best Gesneriad: *Chrysothemis pulchella* 'Black Flamingo', **Jeane Hatfield.** Best Design, **Barbara Elkin.** Design Sweepstakes, **Kathy Norton.**

FOX VALLEY AVS, IL – Winners: Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Lyon's June Bug, Classic Rock; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuddy Duddy; Best Miniature: Windsome; Best Design, **Andrea Worrell.** Best Trailer: Ramblin' Show Stopper; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Tomi Griesenauer.** Best Gesneriad: *Petrocosmea* Species 5, **Judi DuPont.** Design Sweepstakes, **Micheline England.**

LONE STAR AV COUNCIL, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Lonestar Twilight, Amy Lyn, Tomahawk; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Vanilla Trail, Rob's Boolaroo, Milky Way Trail; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Best Standard: Lonestar Twilight; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *grotei*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Ben Haning.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, Favorite Child, The Alps, **Richard Nicholas.** 2nd Best Mini/Semi Collection: Eternal Orbit, Rob's Scrumptious, Rob's Suicidal Squirrel; Best Semi-

miniature: Eternal Orbit; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid, **Anne Nicholas**. Best AVSA Species Collection: *Saintpaulia rupicola* clone Cha Simba, *Saintpaulia* clone *confusa*, *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *ionantha* var. *ionantha*, **Gary Thurman**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Blue Nile', **Diane Buck**. Best in Design, **Ruth Goeke**. Design Sweepstakes, **Jane Rexilius**.

MID ATLANTIC AVS, NC – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Forever Ruthellen, Ness' Candy Pink, Newtown Quiet Resolve; Best in Show/Best Standard: Ma's Secret Child; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Libbie Glembocki**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Cool Blue, Optimara Little Ottawa; Best Trailer: Jersey Girl Trail; Best Semiminiature: Ness' Crinkle Blue, **Joan Santino**. Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy, **Ralph Robinson**. Best Gesneriad: *Gesneria* 'Yellow Bird', **Karyn Cichocki**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Sharon Long**.

MISSOURI VALLEY AV COUNCIL, MO – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Hot Expectations, Cajun's Cherished Hope, Cajun's Drama Queen; Best Standard: Cajun's Cha-Ching!, **Terri Post**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Chagall, Rhapsodie Rebecca, Tatanka; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kent Stork**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Fire, Jolly Splashy, Precious Pink; Best Semiminiature: Precious Pink, **Rancy Deutsch**. Best in Show/Best Miniature: Little Miss Muffet, **Lynn Canning**. Best Trailer: Ramblin' Dots, **Mary Jo Bradley**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5h clone *velutina* lite; Design Sweepstakes, **Brandon Erikson**. Best Gesneriad: *Columnea* 'Dragon Fire', **Elmer Godney**. Best Design, **Pat Sutton**.

NUTMEG STATE AVS, CT – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rhapsodie Carolyn, Optimara Colorado, Rhapsodie Emilie, **Roger Wheeler**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Affection, Optimara Colorado, Rhapsodie Carolyn; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cupid's Jewel, Blueberry Kisses, Rob's Hallucination; Best Standard: Mirror Image; Best Miniature: Precious Red; Best Trailer: Rambin' Amethyst; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Edna Rourke**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Heatwave, Slow

Dancin', Precious Pink; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Precious Pink, **Lynn Wallach**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Suomi', **Vivian Hiltz**.

THOUSAND OAKS AVS, CA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Maui, Robert Mayer, Rhapsodie Marilyn; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Bad Bunny, Jolly Jubilee, Rob's Chilly Willy; Best Miniature: Frosted Denim; Best Trailer: Rob's Wagga Wagga; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Gay Wilson**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Namely Nancy, **Lyndell Fong**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola*; Best Gesneriad: *Eucodonia* 'Adele', **Barbara Burde**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuzzy Navel, **Ann Wang**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Leslie Cox**.

TRI STATE AV COUNCIL, NJ – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Picasso, Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, Tiger; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Outer Orbit, Jersey Little Devil, Eternal Orbit; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Sweet Amy Sue; Best Standard: Picasso; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Outer Orbit; Best Miniature: Everdina; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Paula Ball**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Cranberry Swirl, Irish Flirt, Jolly Texan; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5f clone *orbicularis* var. *purpurea*; Best Gesneriad: *Nautilocalyx grandulifer*, **Bob Kurzynski**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Jan Murasko**.

WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL OF AFRICAN VIOLETS, WI – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Grandmother's Halo, Live Wire, Ma's Wicked Witch; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Blue Clouds, Jolly Diamond, Optimara Little Rhodonite; Best in Show/Best Standard: Live Wire; Best Miniature: Jolly Blue Clouds; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone *tongwensis*, **Kevin Degner**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rebel's Rose Bud, Funambule, Buffalo Hunt; Best Gesneriad: *Columnea* 'Early Bird'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Arlene Garvens**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Lucky Ladybug, Ness' Sno Fun, Rob's Shadow Magic, **Janice Judd**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Scrumptious, **Nancy Braun**. Best Trailer: Foxwood Trail, **Nancy Braun**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Doug Kindschuh**.

High-Voltage 'Violets,' Part 1

By William Scheick
Contributing Editor Texas Gardner Magazine

If my own experience is typical, it's easy to have misconceptions about African violets. It would be a mistake, though, to believe that these fuzzy-leafed tropicals are too finicky to be endured or that they are doted on only by Mayberryish Aunt Bees.

I had my eyes opened at several African violet shows. There are many such shows, often listed on websites for the Lone Star African Violet Council (www.LSAVC.org) and the African Violet Society of America (www.AVSA.org).

During my visits to these exhibitions and markets, I was struck by the range of juried entries. It was impressive to see them all, but they made me wonder just what qualifies for an African violet show.

AFRICAN VIOLETS & MORE

So I turned to three people who would know: Anne Nicholas in Denton, Marge Savage in Midland, and Penny Smith-Kerker in Austin. Each oversees an extensive collection of African violets (including their own award-winning entries) and each has a long association (often including various official duties) with their regional groups, the statewide Lone Star African Violet Council, and also the national African Violet Society of America.

"Just what qualifies for an African violet show?" I asked. "That's a great question," Anne cheerfully and patiently started, preparing to ease me gently off the hook of my naïveté.

"The African violets (*Saintpaulia*) seen in supermarkets or on a relative's kitchen windowsill actually belong to a much larger family of plants called *Gesneriads*," she explained. "The shows contain lots of African violets plus their cousins, the other gesneriads, including *Streptocarpus*, *Episcias*, *Chiritas*, *Sinningias*, *Columnneas* and many others. In a judged show," Anne continued, "African violets and the other gesneriads are evaluated in separate categories. There are awards for both the best African violets and for the best 'other' gesneriads."

"African violets and the 'other' gesneriads are not just cousins," Penny added. "Care is very similar for most of them; so almost all the club members grow at least a few other gesneriads with their African violets." They are simply too irresistible to ignore, she suggested. "There are so *many* different Gesneriads that it's fun growing them for their unique blossoms as well as for their variations in leaf shapes, sizes, veining, and color."

Okay then, an African violet show is really a Gesneriad show, though the general public might be clueless if it were actually billed as such. And it turns out, too, that even the popular *Saintpaulia* species, for which the African violet shows are named, are actually *gloxinia* relatives, not violets at all.

VIOLET-CARE BASICS

But, of course, I have more questions. I have noticed about a half dozen African violets on a north-facing windowsill of a nifty restaurant across from the UT campus in Austin. There they sit flowering year-round at room temperature, in parking-lot light and with seemingly minimal attention, and I always think: can their care be that easy?

The answer, apparently, is mostly "yes," and a little "no." Setting up is easy enough — a healthy plant, a pot, a saucer, and both African violet soil and food. Although there are specialty pots designed specifically for African violets, "a four-inch

plastic 'azalea (squatty) pot' works well in Texas," Marge said, "with terracotta and decorative pots used as cache containers for display." The pot sits on a saucer filled with pebbles. Florescent "cool whites" or Gro-Lights (with instructions about distances) are a possibility, but for most of



Anne Nicholas



Penny Smith-Kerker Yes, you can touch them — no nails, please." That suggestion that touching causes violet leaves to blacken, Penny humorously speculated, might be something "your mom told you to keep you away from her plants."

Also according to Marge, who cares for over 100 Gesneriads in a bedroom (aka "The Plant Room") in dry West Texas, "the biggest misconception about raising African violets or other Gesneriads is: 'Oh, I can't grow those,' even though the same doubters might say 'my grandmother used to grow them when....' Well, Yes, you can!" she insisted. "All it takes is confidence and consistency. There are easy things you can do. Reading the directions is part of it. We all hate that. Some people have a natural gift for growing and don't need directions, but most of us do."

Which brings us to the "too muches" and the "not enoughs" — about which Penny joked, "It really helps to have mild OCD." But she cares for over 300 plants, all grown under fluorescent lights covering 92 square feet of tiered shelving and other surfaces in her home. It took her ten years to get into this situation; so a beginner will be safe for a while.

As for the "too muches" and "not enoughs," Gesneriads go bad when under-watered or (even worse) over-watered. "These are fibrous-rooted plants," Marge indicated. "They don't have tap-roots for water storage. Fertilized water needs to flow through the roots." Experts recommend bottled water or tap water left to stand a day at the plant-room temperature to allow for a reduction of leaf-burning chlorine. In West Texas, Marge told

Texas an east or (less ideally) a north windsill will serve at typical room temperature (around 70° F).

"If you are hot, your violets are too hot," Marge pointed out. "If you are cold, they are too cold. Gently hold a leaf between thumb and forefinger. If it feels

warm, then it is too hot.

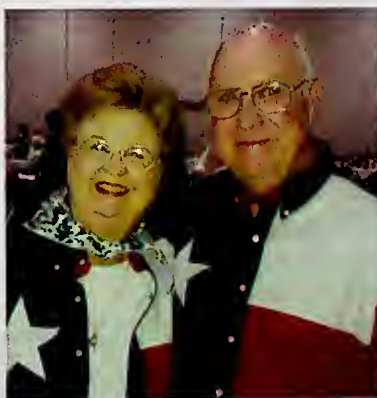
me, many people use reverse-osmosis water because of the salt in city water. Cold water results in leaf curling, and wet crowns are prone to rot. Hydrate until the water exits the pot. Discard that dirty water and then, using clean water, barely cover the pebbles on which the pot will sit for humidification without any further direct contact with water.

VIOLET-CARE SECRETS

The African Violet Society of America also recommends "wicking" — connecting the saucer and the bottom of the pot with moisture-conductive two-ply nylon yarn, four-ply acrylic baby yard, nylon seining twine or pantyhose. Marge's African violets are wick-watered. "Small violets and leaves I'm starting are in a plastic tray filled with capillary matting — an old nylon blanket, cut up. I pour the fertilized water in, and the blanket takes it up."

There are variations on this theme for her other Gesneriads. "I use glass 'bubble' bowls for my episcias, with a huge 18-inch one for my terrarium. Mini-sinningias are in small glass bowls. These can come from hobby stores (40% off) or garage sales, or Goodwill. The glass bowls have a square of Saran Wrap sealing them." Marge also uses a humidifier and vaporizers "bought at garage sales." Often she covers her newly potted and stressed plants with a clear plastic bag. "Humidity cures lots of things," she assured me. "I have plastic domes that fit the trays for my leaf propagation. Without the domes in our dry climate, the plants really don't put up 'babies' well."

In such settings with low humidity, light spraying can be helpful, though gravel-level lukewarm water in the pot's saucer is usually sufficient.



Marge & Tom Savage

"My plants love the mister," Marge noted, but she "waits 'til the lights go out. Light magnifies through droplets and makes permanent white spots on the leaves. Sunlight will burn them."

Marge's double "ranch windows" in the plant room are blocked off by plasterboard so she can control the fluorescent lighting. When using natural light and windowsills, Marge cautioned, "Remember, the sun is at different heights throughout the seasons. I burned the tar out of some plants on my dining room windowsill because of this. I needed a sheer curtain. When I'm growing for a show, I tape tissue paper to that window. In West Texas, northern window exposure is good; eastern is good; southern is best; western is a no-no — too doggone hot!"

If not relying on artificial lightening in Central Texas, Penny advised, "don't let African violets get direct western or southern light, which will burn the leaves. Although these plants do need a lot of light to bloom — for example, my plants get an average of 12 hours of light a day on their stands — the light should be indirect, filtered by a sheer curtain or direct through a north or east window."

Too much light or nitrogen, the presence of any natural gas, and inadequate darkness (eight hours are needed daily) curtail flowering. Too much dryness or fertilization browns leaf tips and edges. Too much light damages foliage and can stunt growth. Not enough light or humidity also damages foliage.

"Many beginners take the plant home from the mega-market, repot it in a six-inch cache ceramic pot, fill it with heavy potting soil they bought on sale," Marge observed. "Then the plant goes into shock. It didn't get to go to post-op (acclimate to the new owner's environment). Now the plant can't take up water — the roots are fine, but the

soil is like clay — so the owner waters it again. The roots rot, and the owner waters it again. The crown rots and so do the lovely blossoms — the reason it was bought in the first place. If the beleaguered plant makes it past this point, the owner wonders why it won't bloom. It won't bloom until all those roots *fill up* the entire six-inch pot they were put in. Otherwise, these plants bloom year-round at six-week intervals. They do better in spring and fall, but they do bloom year-round."

African violets perform best when root-bound, Penny explained, and "if their pot is too large, excessive moisture around the roots will end up rotting the plants." So her secrets for success include using a pot only about 1/3 of the plant's diameter, repotting annually and (when necessary) increasing container size by increments of 1/2 to 1 inch. For every hydration (except once-a-month plain watering), she "adds African violet fertilizer at 1/4 the amount specified on label."

Gesneriad pros are always on the lookout for a variety of diseases and infestations (<http://www.avsa.org/Diagnosis.htm>), particularly whenever adding a plant to their collection. Isolate and observe for some time, they recommend, and then study that new plant closely some more. Deadheading spent blooms and also pruning damaged foliage are crucial to plant-disease prevention, not to mention the maintenance of beauty.

High Voltage 'Violets' Part 1
Will appear in the May/June 2013
African Violet Magazine

The AVSA Legacy Society

By Janet Riemer

The AVSA Legacy Society is an outgrowth of the Tinari Endowment Fund. It was created by the Board of Directors to recognize bequests to the Society of \$1,000 or more. Bequests may be made in one's will or by designating the Society as a beneficiary in an insurance policy. Legacy Society members wear a special ribbon at convention and are named in the *African Violet Magazine*.

Members as of January 2014 are:

Douglas and Lynn Allen
Carolee Carter
John and Judy Carter
Linda Hall
Nancy Hayes
Terry Klemesrud
Margaret Farrand
Richard and Anne Nicholas
Janet Riemer
Joyce Stork
Lynne Wilson

The Violet Network

By Jennie Lawrence

Email: missjennae@yahoo.com

Most of us have a love-hate relationship with Facebook. We love it, because it allows us to keep up with friends, many of whom with which we had lost contact. At the same time, many of us find it very easy to get sucked into the Facebook void. We go on to see what is new, and an hour later we are still there, reading posts and looking through the groups we have joined. That is not always a bad thing.

Ann-Marie Keene started the Facebook group, African Violet Nerds, in November 2009. She started the group "just to see what would happen, and if anybody would actually join." Because there were already other similar groups out there, she didn't have high hopes. But within a few weeks, the group had 50 members and has continued to grow. As of November 30, the group had 1,616 members, with more joining all the time. Keene's love of African violets also prompted her to start the group. She felt she didn't know much about them, and hoped to learn something.

African Violet Nerds is open to anyone who has a Facebook account. Members must be willing to follow the rules. Initially, there were few rules. As the group grew, rules became necessary to keep the peace. Keene said the rules are ever evolving to meet the needs of the group. Managing the group, and the occasional controversy is not fun as the administrator, she said. "It is really hard to keep everyone happy all the time," she added.

Keene's favorite part of being the administrator is seeing new people join. They start asking questions and get excited about the hobby. Over time, their knowledge base grows, and they start to teach the newest members. "It is such a fun cycle to observe," Keene said.

The group has members from around the world. People are on Facebook around the clock. They can ask a question, and get a fast reply.

One can find every imaginable African violet related topic discussed by Nerds. Recent topics included the pros and cons of ordering plants and leaves in the winter. Someone else wanted infor-

mation regarding showing NoIDs. This prompted a lively discussion. In addition, there are always beautiful photos of plants in bloom. Photos are also posted when people are having problems, in hopes of finding help for their plant.

People join the African Violet Nerds group for a variety of reasons. Member Diann Toler joined the "Nerds" because she wanted to start growing more seriously, and needed a mentor. She found a whole group of mentors. She finds the "Nerds" are wonderful people who share their experience and knowledge with a good dose of humor. She also appreciates the patience people have with rookie questions. They still give genuine answers, even if the question has already been asked hundreds of times.

Another member, Ann States, found African Violet Nerds by accident. She was growing nice plants, but had no one to talk to about them. She felt she and her plants were living in a violet vacuum. The "Nerds" gave her a large ring of people who were willing to talk violets. States said the advice is gently put. Members realize that everyone's growing conditions are different. There is never any 72 degrees or death kind of advice.

Rachel Martin joined the "Nerds" because it is nerdy. She says it is nice to find people talking about epigenetics (a change in appearance that does not involve a change to the DNA), evolutionary biology, and approaching African violet growing in a technical way.

Pam Ginaven Barnhart cited the depth of wisdom and knowledge available to Nerds. She specifically mentioned Joyce Stork, saying the Nerds are lucky to have her as a member.

To join, log in to Facebook, and type "African Violet Nerds" into the search window. Click, "Join group". Keene must approve the membership. A Facebook account is easy to set up, for those who do not have one. Simply Google "Facebook". Follow the easy directions to join.

From beginning hobbyist to professional grower, African Violet Nerds has something for everyone.

For Beginners

By Cheryl Salatino

14 Maple Avenue • Sudbury, MA 01776

Email: cheryl@dancingshadowsdesign.com

Spots, Marks, and Freckles

What is that spot on the Leaves?

Whenever I wander into my plant room, I have a Shakespearean experience. It's a passage I recall from the play Macbeth that seems to resonate. I can hear Lady Macbeth uttering those fated words, "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" Here's where I am going with this: We often wonder why a random spot appears on the foliage of a perfectly healthy African violet. Seems our favorite plant likes to show us their reaction to changes in growing conditions and practices. When the plant is unhappy, it will let us know. In this article, we'll take a look at how changes in your growing environment may affect the appearance of your African violet foliage.

Offender #1: Ring Spots or Splotches

These spots are often yellow, brown, or light colored. They can appear as circular or irregular marks on the leaves. This type of mark can also emerge as a wandering line across the leaf. Where they appear in the foliage is generally random to our eyes.



Temperature changes African violets are similar to people when it comes to a comfortable temperature. The preferred range is between 65 and 75 degrees. Clearly, that's a tall order for growers in most parts of the US and around the globe. Day and night time temperatures can reach much warmer or much cooler numbers at various times of the day. In order to prevent some of these random,

unsightly spots, you'll want to pay attention to both water and room temperature.

Water temperature. The roots of the African violet prefer tepid or warm water. A cold drink will give the plant a shock to its system. It may not show up immediately – but it will likely display some evidence of unhappiness. How do you know if the temperature of the water is right? Use the finger test. When it feels warm or neutral to the touch, you've got it right. Often we leave water in containers in our plant room. Test it before use. I find container water is unexpectedly cool or even cold to the touch. I'd bristle too if someone poured that water on me.

Room temperature. Heating and air conditioning help us maintain a level of consistency in our living conditions. We extend those same technologies to our growing rooms. However, it's the cold temperatures and cold drafts that are the culprits here. In the Northeast, where I grow, the size of our heating bill is often a factor in determining the temperature of the growing area. At night, we turn the heat down and put on lots of blankets for ourselves. To maintain a warmer environment for our African violets, many growers cover plant stands with a bed sheet or a plastic tent.

Related to Room Temperature:

Powdery Mildew. Rule of thumb – watch out for temperature extremes. Any change of more than 10 degrees in room temperature can introduce the fungus, powdery mildew. It's that white powdery substance that collects on blossom stalks, foliage, buds, and blossoms. Some say it's a spring effect – warm days and cold nights. I find it can occur throughout the year – especially as seasons change. Good air circulation helps. A small fan comes in handy in my growing area. Just make sure you are circulating the air in the room and not blowing cold drafts onto your plants.

Offender #2: Sun Spots

These spots can result from plants exposed to sunlight, or even bright light, after water droplets have dried on the foliage. This can show up as a brown spot or a white ring (from water residue). Here's how I look at the emergence of a brown spot. Water is a reflector for the sun. During this process, it essentially burns into the leaf surface. Ouch. Feels like sunburn to me.

To manage this condition, remove water droplets left on the plant after a bath. You can easily use the end of a paper towel to absorb excess beads of water. Leave the plant out of the light until the water has completely dried. For window grown plants, be cognizant of morning dew. Once the sun comes out, it can be the source of damage on the foliage – especially the new growth.

Offender #3: Tip Burn

Older, mature foliage can display brown tips that look like a burn mark at the end of the leaf. This condition develops when fertilizer salts build up in the soil or growing medium. There are a couple ways to prevent this from happening. Firstly, regularly repot plants – twice per year is ideal – into a fresh growing medium. Secondly, leach the soil once per month by pouring plain water through the plant. It's amazing to see the change of water color as you do this. You'll know the fertilizer salts have been washed through when the water coming out the bottom of the pot is clear again.

Offender #4: Boo Boos

Clumsy hands and overcrowding can contribute to marks when foliage is bumped or bruised. Be gentle when handling African violets. While the leaves are strong, they do not like to be poked and prodded. And don't forget the impact of pets in the growing area. Cats seem to like to explore and sample our favorite plant. Keep them off the plant stands. If you find you have unexplained marks, mystery solved.

Special Note: Window Grower Alert!

Window growing presents lots of challenges in temperature and light control. To start, control exposure to cold drafts and cold surfaces. Move plants away from windows and off sills during the winter months. Throughout the year, watch the sun exposure and morning dew. Sunburn can be prevented with some vigilance.

Your Environment

Remember, you control your environment. Change in the culture of your plants comes from exposure to a variety of everyday conditions and grooming practices. Add in the passage of time and there's a lot that can go awry if undetected.

Five Tips for Managing Marks:

Maintain consistent temperatures – find an ideal range and stick to it.

Use lukewarm water – keep feet (roots) from catching a cold.

Remove excess water droplets – avoid attracting damaging sun rays.

Move the air around plants – prevent fungal problems with circulation.

Manage your pets – divert them to other adventures.

"To be or not to be, that is the question." This brings me back to my Shakespearean experience. Thanks Hamlet – guess I am in control.

Grow Smart, Grow Well.

Planting a Terrarium

by Jude Neumann

Start your terrarium with a good cleaning so you won't have to disturb the plants when you're finished. You will, of course, have to do some touch-up cleaning after completion. I like to line the bottom with sheet moss, green side down to face out, so soil and perlite won't be too distracting. This also protects the glass from scratching. A sprinkle of horticultural charcoal is a good idea unless there is some in the potting soil. Next add a light porous soil. Remember, you're making a landscape in miniature so have some high and low areas. I have used rocks and wood to hold these levels in place.

Now for the plants. I like to think of the plants at different height levels as you see in nature. There are the tall trees, the medium shrubs or understory, and the low flowers and ground covers. Some contrast in texture and color is needed. Variegated foliage adds interest, but use it sparingly unless the theme calls for more. In our violet shows, there must be one or more blooming violets in the design. The violet does not have to predominate, but it should be in good cultural condition. I always try to use at least three non-violet plants in the design to accompany it. Now, keep in mind the proportions of this landscape; minis and semiminis seem to work best. Young trailers can often be fitted in to conform to the line of the design. The violets are added shortly before the show so that they are in peak condition.

One of the first things the judges look for is the line of the design. The line is what moves your vision through the design—usually a high point graduating down. It should be a smooth sweep, not a lot of ups and downs. It can be an L or in-

verted V or a curve, but it must be there. It may be hard to imagine getting all this in a small space, but remember, you're working with small proportioned plants and accessories. Also, a path or steps or stone outcroppings can form part of the line. Don't overdo the planting. Leave some empty space for balance.

Finish off the design with a natural ground cover. Never leave bare soil showing. You can use such things as long fibered sphagnum moss, sheet moss, or small bark chips. Small bark chips of the right proportion can be found in pet shops where it's sold for use in reptile tanks. It's clean and non-toxic. Pet shops are a good place to find interesting rocks, gravel, and driftwood.

All terrariums must have a top. If you have one cut to fit your container, make sure it's a little larger than the opening. Mirror mounts can then be glued to the edge. Their L shape (picture the L upside down) will hold the top up, allowing some air circulation while still keeping the top centered. You needn't go to a lot of expense on the cover, but some type of cover is required.

You'll find these same principles apply to making container gardens. I am always on the look-out for something that will work. I found one piece in our firewood pile. A small piece of wood attached to the back was all I needed to prop it up and get the balance and angle I was looking for. I created a log design in this piece of wood as a design in a natural container.

Have fun, try a new idea, but most of all, make a design that pleases you.

From *The Empire Violet Magazine*, Publication of the New York State African Violet Society, Inc.



Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

Janet Riemer • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958

Donations received from: September 10 – December 27, 2013 Total = \$ 1195.00



Geneva

Ohio State African Violet Society *In memory of Betty Bartley and Charles Applegate*

Adrienne Rieck *In memory of Janice A. Bruns*

Illinois African Violet Society *In memory of Janice Bruns*

African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa *In memory of Rose Howlett*

Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs *In memory of Janice Bruns*



Multicolor

Garden State African Violet Club (NJ) *In lieu of judging expenses for Bob Kurzynski and Janet Riemer*

Jeri Anderson

Desert Sun African Violet & Gesneriad Society *In memory of Georgette Jolivette*

African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa *In memory of Judith Ann Northrup*

Libbie & Tom Glembocki *In memory of Janice Bruns*

MidAtlantic African Violet Society *In lieu of speaker's fee for Linda Abplanalp*

Judges' Council of Minnesota *In memory of Dolores Harrington*



Two-tone

Susan Anderson *In memory of Georgette Jolivette*

African Violet Club of Burlington County (NJ) *In lieu of judging expenses for Marianne Gershon, David Tooker, Bob Kurzynski, Peggy Mooney, Barbara Jones, Joan Santino, Heather Menzel, Paul Bal, Janet Riemer*

African Violet Club of Ocala (FL) *In memory of Vivian Wise*

Sue Ramser *In memory of Thelma Miller*

Sue Ramser *In memory of Vicki Foster*

Sue Ramser *In memory of Janice Bruns*

Kathy Lahti *In memory of Dolores Harrington*

Jean Wiley *In memory of Janice Bruns*

Hoosier African Violet Society (IN) *In memory of Janice Bruns*



Thumbprint

Carla Yambert

Cindy Bauer

Bergen County African Violet Society *In lieu of judging expense for Janet Riemer*

Tristate African Violet Council *In lieu of judging expenses for Karyn Cichocki and Laurel Brown*

Arlene Garvens *In memory of Janice Bruns*

Loveland Sweetheart Violettes Society (CO) *In memory of Laurie McKitcick*

AVSA – Building Maintenance Fund

Susan Hapner – Chairman

35 Ridge Point Dr. – Chesterfield, MO 63017

Building Maintenance Fund 1 August 2013 to 31 October 2013 TOTALS: \$415.00

Thumbprint



David van Kirk

Ida Bushkuhl

Marvin Nester

Kris Johnson

Church Ministry Food

Pantry/NY

Metro St. Louis AVC *In lieu of judge's fee for Randy Deutsch*

Wilma Wolverson

Pam West

Caroline Storey

Susan Carter

Gail Podany

Eva Terry

Cindy Bauer

Ralph Mancusi

Bergen County AVS/NJ

2-Tone



Capital City AVS/CA
In memory of Ms. Jody Maple

Barbara Werness

Geneva



MO Valley AV Council
Ohio State AVS



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Misty Blue Trinket

Exhibited by: Steven Spachek

Hybridized by: E. Champion

Semiminiature



Rob's Fuddy Duddy

*Second Best African Violet
in Show*

*Exhibited by:
Andrea Worrell*

*Hybridized by:
R. Robinson
Semiminiature*

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Lakeshore Silver

Exhibited by:

Leonard Re

Hybridized by:

J. Brownlie

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Registration Report

By Joe Brun

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Kay Darrow – Brooklyn, MI

'Kbugs Lime Rickey' (10625)
10/16/2013 (K. Darrow/B. Thi-
bodeaux) Single pale green sticktite
pansy/darker shading on top petals,
thin violet edge. **Variegated** light
green and ivory, ovate, glossy, scal-
loped. **Standard**



Patricia Addison – Anchorage, AK
'My Sister BFF' (10628) 10/25/2013
(P. Addison) Single chimera white stick-
tite pansy/blue stripe. Medium green,
heart-shaped, quilted, serrated. **Semi-
miniature**

Rebecca Marsh – Gold Bar, WA

'Moonsong's Lady Fair' (10626)
10/19/2013 (R. Marsh) Single-semidouble
white star/pink patches. **Variegated** medium
green and white, heart-shaped, quilted. **Semi-
miniature**

Paula Bal – West Windsor, NJ
'Paula's Grandpa's Gift' (10629)
11/16/2013 (P. Bal) Single-semidouble coral
large star/purple fantasy. Dark green, plain,
quilted, glossy, serrated. **Standard**
'Paula's PB and J' (10630) 11/16/2013 (P.
Bal) Single-semidouble dark purple star/pink-
coral fantasy. Dark green, plain, quilted,
glossy, serrated/red back. **Standard**

Marge Farrand – Ann Arbor, MI

'Lovely Rainbow' (10627) 10/25/2013 (M.
Farrand) Single chimera light pink sticktite ruf-
fled star/light lavender stripe, dark lavender
fantasy, fuchsia edge. Dark green, heart-
shaped, quilted/red back. **Standard**

REGISTRATION CHANGE

The following has been changed by the hybridizer:
'Gecko's Vespa Sensation' (10616) Change
foliage description to "Dark green, ovate, ser-
rated/red back, *variable bustle back*." [Change in
italics.]

AVSA 2014 Convention Souvenir Book Ads

This year's convention is in Nashville, TN., May
25 – June 1, 2014. The theme is "Violet Pickin' in
Tennessee.

Ads can be well wishes or advertising and help
defray costs. Ads are an excellent way to promote
your organization.

The maximum size of the full page ad is 8" high
x 5" wide: half page, 4" h x 5"w; quarter page,
2"h x 5"w. Prices for ads are the same as in 2013.
The rates for these ads are: Quarter Page, \$30,
USD; Half Page, \$50, USD; Full Page, \$90, USD.
All inside ads will be run in black and white. We
also have three full page spaces on the inside front,
inside back and outside back cover at \$125, USD,

per page printed in black and white or \$150, USD,
printed in color(cover pages only).

To purchase an ad, please reply by mail to Gary
and Rhona Thurman, Souvenir Booklet
Chairpersons, 1818 Lake Quitman Drive,
Richmond, TX 77406 or email at thurmcon-
sul@earthlink.net. The deadline for all ads is April
14, 2014. Camera ready copy is preferred (pdf or
Word doc or docx file).

Checks or money orders in USD should be made
payable to AVSA 2014 Convention account and be
included with your ad. If the ad is sent by email,
please send the check to us at the address above.

AVSA BOOSTER FUND

Shirley Berger, Chairman

November 1 – December 31, 2013 (Revised 1-7-14) - TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS; \$894.00



Fantasy

African Violet Council of Florida

Multicolor

Marge Farrand, Ann Arbor, MI

In memory of Martha Martz



Gary and Rhona Thurman, Richmond, TX

In memory of Fred Hill



Two-tone

African Violet Council of Greater Kansas City, KS
Meredith Hall, Marlin, TX

In memory of Vicki Foster, (father-in-law Bill Foster, Husband Gary Foster)

Patricia Huffman, Carmichaels, PA

Carolyn Lantz, Timberville, VA

Loveland Sweetheart Violettes Society, Loveland, CO

Quad Cities African Violet Society, Iowa

Gary and Rhona Thurman, Richmond, TX

In memory of Bill Lueschen

Tri-State African Violet Council, New Jersey

Jan Houston, Champaign, IL

Thumbprint

Elizabeth D. Lebert, Clinton, CT

Gwen Goodship-Patience,

Berkshire, England

Bonnie Rothschild, Miami, FL

Barbara and Charles Werness, Minneapolis, MN

In memory of Delores Harrington

Barbara and Charles Werness, Minneapolis, MN

In memory of Janice Bruns



Show Schedule Approver

**For information on Shows, AVSA Awards,
and Approving Schedules, write to:**

Meredith Hall

P.O. Box 370

Marlin, TX 76661

Email: m.hall@reagan.com

Do not send Show Schedules by Email – this address is for information ONLY.

DONATED ITEMS FOR THE LUNCHEON AUCTION

If you are sending donated items for the 2014 AVSA Nashville Convention Auction, please send them to:

Holtkamp Greenhouses

c/o Russell Kirchner

1501 Lischey Avenue

Nashville, TN 37207

AVSA SOCIETY AWARDS NOMINEES NEEDED

By Marge Savage, Society Awards Committee
2804 Stutz Drive, Midland, TX 79705 (432) 699-4296
savagetom@grandecom.net

How exciting it was to present our Society Awards at the AVSA Convention in Austin, Texas, last June! How fortunate we were to arrange the spring presentation of the Continuing Service Award to Thelma Miller in her hospital room. Thelma passed away last fall.

We have many deserving, dedicated volunteers, like Thelma, whom we would like to see nominated. As I presented Jacquie Eisenhut the Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial Award for Excellence in Affiliate Leadership, Jacquie had been spirited away by her family members. Many guests in the audience may have been thinking of club members back home who also showed Jacquie's same energetic, supporting, faithful spirit. Please contact me about your nominee or print off the nomination form found on the website. I can snail mail you the form, gladly, if it is helpful.

We rely upon you, our members, to mail or e-mail names of deserving persons with descriptions of accomplishments of **possible** recipients for these AVSA Society Awards. These need to be sent to me by **April 1, 2014** for the upcoming AVSA Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. Your nomination is valid for three years, after which you may again nominate your leader. The Society Awards Committee and the Executive Committee will determine the recipients of these awards. A brief list of Society Awards with their descriptions is as follows:

Hudson Memorial Award: Provided by the Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial (rather than AVSA) for excellence in affiliate (club) leadership. Affiliate secretaries (or other experienced officers)

need to submit names and activities for outstanding leaders of clubs, affiliated with AVSA.

Meritorious Service Award: Awarded to individuals for some special service to AVSA (a certificate).

Honorary One-Year Membership: Awarded for outstanding contributions to AVSA. Required for most other recognition awards (a certificate plus one year membership).

Continuing Service Award: Awarded for continued outstanding service to AVSA (a certificate). *Nominee must first have received the Honorary One-Year Membership.*

Honorary Life Membership: Always received by the out-going AVSA President. Alternate years may be awarded to a worthy nominee who has also been a long-time AVSA member (a certificate, a gold pin, an ID card). This is not to be confused with a Life Membership. (An individual can purchase a Life Membership. You cannot buy an Honorary Life Membership. ;)

Distinguished Service Certificate: Awarded as the highest service award that AVSA may bestow (a certificate). Nominee must first have received the Honorary One-Year Membership and have received the Honorary Life Membership.

Bronze Medal for Horticultural and Scientific Achievement: AVSA's highest award for both scientific and/or horticultural contributions. The nominee is not required to be an AVSA member (a plaque with AVSA medallion).



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Cajun's Freckleface Kid

From 2nd Best AVSA Collection of Standards/Amateur

Exhibited & Hybridized by: Belinda Thibodeaux

Saintpaulia Ancestry Project

By Hector Wong

I hold a degree in Liberal Arts, Biology, and Information Systems. I figure to start this article with my credentials, because talking about *Saintpaulia* ancestry has always been a bumpy road.

I have been growing African violets since I was sixteen, when I started college as a student in agronomy. I just happened to bump into a local AVSA affiliate magazine and, as most of us, became speechless and impressed with the show plants and flower colors. At seventeen, I entered my first plant show, and won a blue rosette, a few Best in Class cards, and more blue ribbons that I could count. I learned everything from the *African Violet Magazine*. Vivid in my mind remains color photos of Barbara Sisk's hybrid 'Spanish Moss,' as well as the many catalogs in the mail from African violet hybridizers.

My lifelong attention to African violets has sparked an interest in genetics; African violet genetics. It is a concept far unexplored, an interest since I was sixteen. I always felt that genetics could explain how a violet-colored flower can have just about any other color, or color combination, after hybridization.

In 1990, I started thinking about the information that could be obtained through knowledge about the parentage of African violets. At that time, no one seemed to understand what I was talking about.

Ten years later, in 2000, I thought about interesting hybridizers in this project. At that time, I had ten hybridizers who liked the idea, and about twenty who were not interested. The Internet was helpful.

In 2013, I once again pursued the idea. At this time, I had twenty hybridizers who liked the idea, and five who did not. The Internet is now a pretty amazing communication tool.

Some of the strongest factors that discouraged the *Saintpaulia* Ancestry Project:

1. Secrecy
2. Loss of records
3. Many interesting and unusual African violets are sports or crosses from unknown parents.
4. Crosses are impossible to duplicate.
5. There would be very little benefits.

Some of the reasons to support the *Saintpaulia* Ancestry Project are:

1. There are more hybridizers.
2. Better record-keeping tools are in existence.
3. Many outstanding violets are the product of years of hybridizers' targeted crosses.
4. Knowing the parentage prevents creating duplicate hybrids.
5. The benefits are small, but as more records are posted, the benefits increase.

Please contact your favorite hybridizer and ask if they would like to share their parentage records. I can be contacted by email at:

hectorgesneriads@gmail.com

The following hybridizers are part of the *Saintpaulia* Ancestry Project:

Brownlie, John / Lebeteskaia, Elena
Burdick, Doug / Pilon, Francine
Clements, Tony / Repkina, Svetlana
Dates, Jim / Robinson, Olive Ma
Elkin, Barbara / Robinson, Ralph
Hajner, Kathy / Rollins, David
Hancock, Pat / Senk, David
Hill, Joan / Smith, Jeff
Hoover, Darryl / Stork, Kent
Jackson, Jeff / Toth, Linda (Hungary)
Lambert, Yvonne

The *Saintpaulia* Ancestry Project can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1aWMBivUHWB2fwzmShXrLX28bUFT1bm3kDDfITojFYRs/viewform>

BOYCE EDENS RESEARCH FUND

Marlene J. Buck • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958

Donations received from: October 1, 2013 – November 30, 2013

Total = \$ 715.00

Geneva



African Violet Society of Philadelphia,
Philadelphia, PA

In memory of Margaret Cass

Betsy & Phil Gottshall, Collegeville, PA

In memory of Margaret Cass

Liberty Bell Gesneriad Society, Philadelphia, PA

In memory of Margaret Cass

Multicolor

John P. Nabers, Friendswood, TX

*In memory of David Sabol, brother of Joyce Sabol
Stenger*

Quentin C. Schlieder, Jr., Smyrna, DE

In memory of Margaret Cass

Marlene Buck, Sun City, AZ

In memory of Margaret Cass

Vice Chairman of the Boyce Edens Research Fund

Tampa African Violet Society, Tampa, FL

*In memory of Mark Kast, the son of our members
Nancy and Jerry Kast*



Town & Country African Violet Society, Redlands, CA
*In memory of Doris Ande, a very active former
member*

Town & Country African Violet Society, Redlands, CA
*In memory of Bernice Wheeler, a very active
former member*



Two-Tone

Bergen County African Violet Society,
Bergen County, NJ

In lieu of a speaker's fee for Joe Palagonia

Judy Smith, Philadelphia, PA

In honor and memory of Margaret Cass

Barbara D Taswell-Miller, Olathe, KS

Thumbprint

Cindy Bauer, Middleton, WI

Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN

Tristate African Violet Council, Trenton, NJ

*In honor of Marianne Gershon, in lieu of judge's
expenses for Tristate African Violet Council 2013
Show*



Affiliates Update

by Mel Grice

Please check the AVSA website to see if the information listed there is current for your club. This is a great way to advertise your club and let interested people know that there is a club in their area. On the AVSA website www.avsa.org — click on LOCAL CLUBS and you will see a list of regions — states in the USA and other countries of the world. Check the information found there for your club. If the information needs updating, you can click in the pink box and choose to add or update your club information online, or you can print out the PDF of the information that I need to know and mail it to me by regular mail. Please be sure to include the complete contact information (including email address) for the AVSA representative in your club so that I may pass along future communications of interest.

Did you know that I am able to send you information and ideas on how to organize and create a new affiliated club if there is not one in your area?

I can also supply you with a list of people in your area who are AVSA members as a starting point to build club membership. I have a lady who lives in Lawrence County Tennessee who wants to start a club. Contact me if you would like to help her.

Do you have a club show or sale to advertise? I can list your event on the AVSA website. Just send me the complete information for your event. Don't forget that our AVM editor, Ruth Rumsey, still needs your event information for it to be listed in the magazine. Just remember to look inside the AVM for the deadline dates for submitting future events to the magazine.

I hope that you will register for the Affiliate Meeting this year at the AVSA convention in Nashville. Come share ideas and success stories with AVSA members from around the country. It would be so wonderful if we could have at least one representative from each AVSA Affiliate in attendance. Together we can grow AVSA!



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

Columnnea 'Light Prince'

Exhibited by: Marian Meschkow



Cajun's Storm Watch

Exhibited by:

BJ Ohme

Hybridized by:

*Belinda Thibodeaux
Standard*

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Buckeye Seductress

Exhibited by:

Catherine Thompson

Hybridized by:

Pat Hancock

Large



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

PRESENTATIONS

2014 AVSA NASHVILLE CONVENTION

Session 1

"Elements and Principles of Design Demystified"

Thursday, May 29 • 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Mel Grice, Englewood, OH

Do your eyes glaze over when someone mentions the elements and principles of design? Are you confused when judging or viewing Interpretive Flower and Interpretive Plant Arrangements at an AVSA Show? What do form, line, space, texture, balance, rhythm, etc., have to do with creating an appealing flower arrangement or design? Mel Grice will use photos he took at the World Association of Flower Arrangers Conference in Boston to illustrate the various elements and principles of design, and show how they contribute to an eye-popping floral design. Just substitute African violet blossoms, or plants, and *Viola!* — you can create your own winning arrangement.

This presentation is for everyone — designers, AVSA judges, and those who have never attempted an artistic arrangement, but would like to try making one.



Session 2

"African Violet Photography for Everyone"

Friday, May 30 • 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Julia Mavity-Hudson, Joelton, TN, and Tom Glembocki, Apex, NC

This seminar will help you take better photos of your African violets. Join Julie Mavity-Hudson, photographer for the Gesneriad Society, and Tom Glembocki, AVSA Library photographer on a journey covering all you need to know about creating the perfect African violet photo. We will cover all aspects; from the ABCs of lighting to lenses, composition, backgrounds, and using a variety of camera types. Whether you take pictures with a cell phone, smart phone, point-and-shoot camera, or the latest professional DSLR, you will learn some great tips to make those African violet photos stand out from the crowd.

Session 3

"Creating Gesneriad Show Plants"

Friday, May 30 • 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Dale Martens, Sherrard, IL

Dale Martens is an AVSA Bronze Medal winner and former "Gesneri-Advice" columnist. She's a *Gesneriad* hybridizer, and her hybrid *Streptocarpus* 'Heartland's Peacock' won Best *Streptocarpus* at the Detroit convention. In addition, her variegated *Streptocarpus*, 'Dale's Polar Lava', won a Special Award. Dale will present a program showing step-by-step pictures and discuss fertilizers and light conditions to grow *Episcias*, miniature *Sinningias*, and *Streptocarpus* for show. As usual, she'll share baggies of plant material.



Session 4

"LIVE! LIVE!! LIVE!!!"

Saturday, May 31 • 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Bill Foster, Mesquite, TX and Shows and Judges Committee

An opportunity with Bill Foster and his Judging Committee to judge the African violets and species live on the BIG SCREEN. If you enjoy "Walk with the Judges" programs, this takes it to the next level!

Session 5
"So You Want To Win Rosettes?"
Saturday, May 31 • 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
B.J. Ohme, Lincoln, NE

Come and join B.J. Ohme, a commercial member of AVSA, as he guides you through his process of growing show-winning African violets. B.J. will present you with many tips and ideas that you may very well never have thought of. Potting mixes, fertilizers, lighting, selection of plants, and much more will be discussed in this enlightening and entertaining program. Come join B.J. for an afternoon of "show talk," and see just what he's doing to produce winning plants.

Nashville 2014 Convention Show Awards

Time is short to contribute to the Nashville Convention Show, "African Violets in the Biggest Little City". Your individual or club donations are always appreciated and it is not too late to get one in the mail. The awards that we give are important because they encourage people to show their plants

and the awards serve as a reward for their hard work. Members and affiliates make these awards possible through their donations and we encourage each of you to consider giving an award. Here are the latest donations and corrections to the fund:

Undesignated Awards:

- \$200 – Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society (VA)
- \$100 – Carol Allegretti (FL)
- \$75 – Ovella Hall (AR)
- \$50 – Sherrie & Phil Wallace (OK)
- \$25 – Magic Knight AV Society (TX)
- \$25 – Memphis AV Society (TN)
- \$25 – Susan K. Hill (KS)
- \$25 – Alice Dulaney (PA)
- \$25 – Bobbi Johannsen (FL)
- \$25 – Linda Stinnette (VA)
- \$25 – Cedar Valley Violet Club (IA)
- \$20 – Pat Knight (VA)
- \$20 – Thousand Oaks AV Society (CA)
- \$15 – Long Island AV Society (NY)
- \$10 – Barbara Jones (PA) in memory of Bettie Roth

Specific Awards:

- \$100 – Best "Buckeye Nostalgia" – Pat Hancock (OH)
- \$35 – Best Dish Garden – Barbara Burde (CA)
- \$25 – Best "Optimara Michigan" – Towne & Country AV Club (MI)
- \$25 – Best Underwater Arrangement – AV Club of Morris County (NJ)

Amateur Horticulture:

- \$50 – Heart of Jacksonville AV Society (FL)
- \$50 – Joan Santino (PA)
- \$50 – Terry Klemesrud (MN)
- \$25 – Best Species – Violet Gallery (PA)
- \$25 – Cincinnati AV Society (OH)

- \$25 – Susan Joy (OH)
- \$20 – Joanne Janos (PA) in memory of Sheina Spencer
- \$15 – Richmond AV Society (VA)
- \$10 – Leslie Swezey (PA)

Commercial Division:

- \$25 – Best Species – Violet Gallery (PA)
- \$50 – Joan Santino (PA)

Corrected Awards:

- \$50 – Dolores Gibbs (TX)
- \$25 – First Austin AV Society (TX)
- \$25 – Judith Neumann (MN)
- \$25 – Claire Ulanoff (TN) in memory of Mollie Meisner

Thanks to the many individuals, clubs, and councils who have offered their generous award support for the 2014 show in Nashville! It is your generosity that puts the smiles on the faces of the winners. There is still time to be included on our list. Send your check or money order payable in U.S. Funds and made out to "AVSA" to:

Judith Carter
AVSA Awards Chair
1825 W. Lincoln St.
Broken Arrow, OK 74012

We look forward to hearing from you! The final deadline to be listed in the Souvenir Book has been extended to April 15, 2014. View a current awards listing on the AVSA web site at www.avsa.org under National Convention. Although every attempt has been made to list awards correctly, we reserve the right to modify or change these listings.

Technically Speaking...or Not

By Neil Lipson

Phone: (610) 356-6183

Email: ndlipson@gmail.com

Using Infrared Photography to Diagnose African Violet Diseases...and Doing It at Low Costs

Whenever you have a technical problem, creative thinking is often the best way to solve it. I knew that most African violet diseases were in the deep tissue of the plant, but couldn't figure how to "see" that deep. Sure, you could x-ray the plant using "soft tissue" screens with x-ray film and an x-ray machine, but that wasn't practical for the average – or even the advanced – grower.

Then, I started hearing about infrared (IR) photography using digital cameras. I played with IR photography after my dad, who was a reconnaissance photographer in WWII, taught me photochemistry as a child. The process was expensive, grainy, and just not practical. You had to take multiple shots on film, and adjust each shot for the focus as IR focuses on a different plane than visible light. That translated to five or six shots for each scene, but I got it to work, and it was exciting beyond belief.

Fast forward to 2010, when some companies started to modify the sensors in digital cameras. By 2013, the cost dropped substantially, and I jumped on it. I knew the problem, and now I had the tools to solve the problem. I scoured the Internet for articles on using IR for African violets and found absolutely nothing. I took a big chance and sent one of my extra Canon digital camera bodies off to Spencer's Camera in Utah to have the IR filter removed from the sensor and then tried it out. IT WORKED! I knew that Canon made an IR body, the Canon 60D-alpha, but the body cost alone was twice that of a regular Canon 60D. The modification I decided to do was from Spencer's Camera Repair and was \$250, which did the same thing. I was ready to proceed. (However, if growers find the \$250 cost-prohibitive, they can get close with another simple modification on a point-and-shoot,



which will be discussed later in this article.)

I decided to dedicate this camera, a Canon XTi with a Tamron lens, to IR photography, as I have other camera bodies for all my other photographic work. It was an old Canon camera, with few of the features of today's DSLR, but it gave me a new venue – to work with the infrared (IR) spectrum. The camera shop removed the existing IR blocking filter on the sensor and

replaced it with a daylight filter that changed the camera from photographing everyday photos to a camera that can **only** see infrared wavelengths. This saved me from having to buy an IR filter.

I took some photos outside of the trees and lawn, and you can see in Figure 1 (taken with another Canon) and Figure 2 the difference between regular color photography and IR photography. All the colors change, as IR color photography is false color, which means that the different shades and IR wavelengths are shown as different colors. I then photographed some African violets with both a regular Canon body and then with the 2nd IR body, and those are shown in Figures 3 and 4. You will immediately see that the IR shots penetrate below the epidermis and deeper into the leaf, into the mesophyll layer. The same applies to the flowers, as is also obvious in the photos.

All of my plants are healthy, and I knew that a healthy mesophyll layer is even-colored, and you will see no blotches of different colors, which would indicate a disease. The variegation in the leaves does penetrate into the mesophyll, and can be seen on both the regular and IR photos. The flowers show better how the IR brings out the mesophyll than the leaves do. Any kind of stress, such as diseases, insects and such, will show as darker



Figure 1



Figure 3



Figure 2



Figure 4

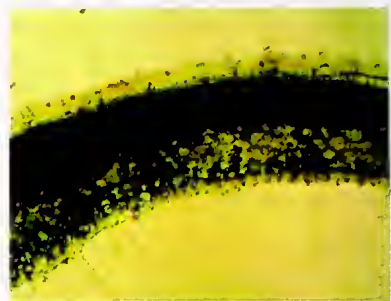
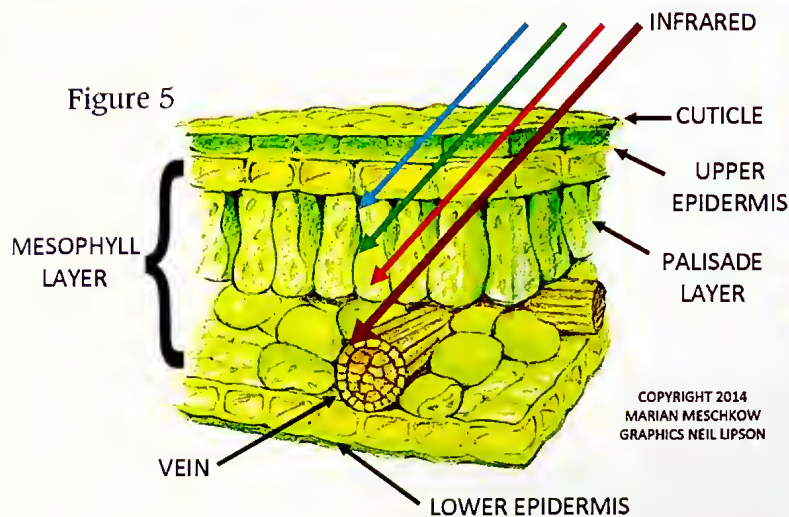
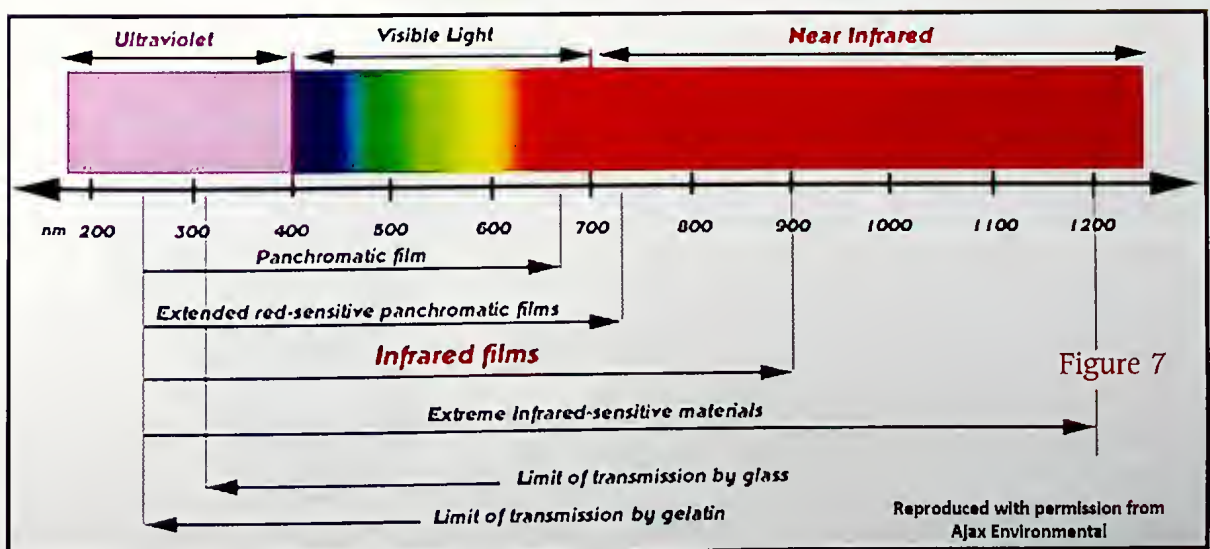


Figure 6



areas in the mesophyll layers of the leaf, but not necessarily in the epidermis.

Now, what diseases would this be helpful in diagnosing? INSV would show up in the mesophyll first, and then later would be seen in the epidermis. It would also give you a better location to do the testing to minimize a false negative. Thrips damage would be seen too, as lines where the thrips were tunneling. This would appear close to white in the photographs as thin lines.

To get a better idea of how the different colors or wavelengths penetrate the leaf, I had an artistic rendition of a cross section of an African violet leaf shown in Figure 5. As you can see, normal light consists of red-green-blue wavelengths that are illustrated with the red, green and blue arrows and will penetrate to different layers in the epidermis, with red penetrating the deepest. *However, the infrared wavelength actually goes well below the epidermis, which is seen in the diagram.*

I then asked my friend, Dr. Rachel Martin, Associate Professor at UC Irvine, CA, who has access to a microscope with a camera, to photograph an African violet leaf cross section, which is shown in Figure 6, as a reference.

It would be helpful to understand a little more about the infrared spectrum and what spectrums are useful for what kind of research you're doing. In Figure 7 you see the spectral range that we are dealing with and the nanometers of the wavelengths. The human eye sees from about 400nm (nanometers), which is near ultraviolet, to about 750nm, which is near infrared (IR). The IR sensor, however, with the filter to block out visible light, goes from 630nm to about 1100nm, opening up a whole new world of "light" in the infrared range. Keep in mind that "far" IR can go all the way to about 10,000nm, which is actually heat, and that can be seen with a deep-IR video camera. As you go deeper into the IR range, the cost of the equipment goes up sharply, with some of them in the \$10,000 range or more. We only require the 630nm to 1100nm range for African violets.

How does this affect what we are doing to analyze the health of African violets? Different layers of the leaf are visible with different wavelengths of light. For example, when a dermatologist wants to

check for skin cancer, they will light up the skin with UV light. This causes the pre-cancerous lesions to "glow," showing the physician which areas to treat. The same technique of photography with IR applies to African violets.

Whenever you narrow the range of any kind of light with some type of filter, the engineering term for this is a Narrow Bandpass filter. All of these filters are available off the shelf, and it is the researcher's job to determine what wavelengths show a particular disease. You simply screw the filter onto the lens, and you're ready to go. As prices drop on the equipment and the interest of growers increases, this could be a very powerful tool for both the professional growers and amateurs, like you and me.

THE PROCEDURE FOR DOING THIS TYPE PHOTOGRAPHY

There are two ways to get the results you need, and how to take the photo. The first will be with a DSLR of almost any type, and the second with be with your less-expensive point-and-shoot. Figure 8 shows my modified Canon camera and Tamron lens.

First, if possible, calibrate your monitor for color, not only for this photography, but for any African violet photography. I personally use the Spyder4Pro color calibration system, which is more high-end. It gives spot-on accuracy for exact color. However, there are other less-expensive ways, albeit more time consuming, that I'll discuss in a future article on photographing African violets.



Figure 8

Next, if your DSLR has a RAW mode, set the camera there, photographing in the RAW format. If not, don't worry, you will still get good results from normal JPEG photos. Use your flash and never take the photo under GroLux or any fluorescent lamps, as they skew the colors. Take your photos, and if you have any post-processing programs like Photoshop or Photo Elements, make your adjustments with them (exposure, vibrance, etc.).

What if you have a point-and-shoot, or a DSLR, that you don't want to modify? If your camera has a thread mount, you can use the Opteka HD² R72 720nm Infrared X-Ray IR Filter, which is on Amazon for about \$10. If the size is too big, you can get an adapter ring for a few dollars to mate it to the lens. These adapters work for almost any of these cameras that have a screw mount, so you have a lot of flexibility. There is a little more trial and error as the filter blocks out visible light, and you'll have to experiment with the exposure time. You also won't be able to see anything through the viewfinder, as there is too little light to be visible as it is only letting in the IR wavelengths. Also, the colors of the IR photograph aren't as vivid using a point-and-shoot, but you can still "see" through the leaf about as much as with the more expensive modification. Exposure time will be about a minute to start with, so you must use a tripod, and

possibly an old incandescent lamp, as a flash won't work.

SUMMARY

The method that I described in the above article is totally new for almost all growers out there. If someone is actually doing this, I have heard nothing about it. It is a tool, and now that the information in this article is disseminated I hope to hear from others about what they saw in their uses implementing this idea. It would be rewarding to hear what wavelengths show which diseases and viruses. Hopefully, it will lead to early detection of many of the diseases and viruses that affect African violets and other similar plants, as it has previously been done with crops and trees.

I must thank Dr. Rachel Martin, Associate Professor at UC Irvine and Marian Meschkow, avid grower and artist for her rendition of the leaf. In addition, Mike Heck provided proofing and some technical help. In particular I want to give a special thank you to Carolee Carter, whose knowledge and inspiration helped me write three of my articles in 2013 for AVM.

Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant. He can be reached by emailing him at ndlipson@gmail.com or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. He will return your call.

Potting Mix and Roots

By Irene Hatzinisiriou

Choosing the correct potting mix for your plants will ensure your plants maintain a healthy root system, resulting in a healthy-growing plant.

A healthy plant has lots of white, fine roots. The fine roots are the ones that absorb water and nutrients from the soil. The soil also needs to have the correct pH so that the roots can absorb these necessary nutrients.

The potting mix is the most important component. Apart from the obvious, that it anchors the plant upright, it is also a medium that transports water and fertilizer/nutrients to the root system. A fine balance of potting mix density must be ensured so that the plant isn't tightly or too loosely packed into the potting mix, otherwise the plant will suffer.

Those precious fine white roots also need air, so if the potting mix is densely packed, they could start to rot as they will be water logged. When re-potting your plants, always avoid pressing the potting mix down around the plant. A gentle tap on the potting bench will avoid this.

Roots should be able to penetrate the potting mix easily. If the potting mix particles are too small, they will compact and likely to hold too much water, not allowing much air flow. If the potting mix particles are too large, they may not hold enough water and may dry out the roots much quicker.

From *The Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

GROOMING AS YOU GROW... FROM BIRTH TO SHOW

by Pat Hancock

AVSA judges are told to "look for beauty, not flaws." However, when we point score plants, we are doing the exact opposite. We are starting with each plant scoring 100 points and deducting points for the flaws that we see. Having fewer flaws begins when the plant is very young and continues right up until show time. Perfection requires constant everyday care.

The most common flaw that points are taken off for is small leaves under large leaves. We take off up to one point per leaf. On a large standard plant, this can be ten or more points when a whole row of leaves is smaller. However, if you wait until show time to remove these leaves, you will leave an exposed neck. For an exposed neck, up to three points will be deducted.

It is far better to begin removing small leaves when the plant is very small. Removing small, unnecessary leaves early on gives more growth to the crown, and plants will grow faster and larger.

Every two or three months, you should remove the three smallest leaves. Leaves grow from the crown in sets of three and should always be removed as a set of three. Plants should also be mold-potted every three or four months.

If you, for some reason, neglect to fertilize a plant for a week or two — the result will be a row of smaller leaves. These leaves can also be removed and the plant will fill in. Do not fool yourself that these smaller leaves will ultimately grow larger if you start to fertilize again. They will not.

Points are also lost for space between the leaves. Part of this problem is in the choice of plants to grow for show. There are some plants that will never have show foliage, no matter what you do. Years ago, I tried to make show plants by using skewers to move leaves around and try to cover spaces. It helped somewhat, but not enough. Try to choose varieties that have good natural symmetry and save yourself a lot of trouble. Spaces are not just around the outer edge of the

plant. When you look down at a plant from the top, you should not see the soil in the pot. Leaves should "shingle" as a roof so that each leaf lies between the two leaves on the row before. Judges deduct up to three points for each space between leaves.

Be very cautious if you decide to foliar feed or spray your plants. Spray residue can be extremely hard to remove, and spots on leaves will cost up to one point each? Always use very hot water when spraying. It will lose heat as it goes through the air. Do not place plants back under the lights when wet. Spots may usually be removed with one part white vinegar to three parts warm water. Use a soft sponge to apply, and rinse with plain warm water.

People who seriously grow for show keep their plants disbudded at all times until about two months before the show. There are several reasons for this, but the most important one is that a bloom stalk coming up may not be between two leaves. If you are unaware that it is there, it can distort the spot where the leaf should be, and the leaf may become twisted or just in the wrong place. Allowing leaves to grow in the proper space unmolested is very important to the final shape of the plant.

Another reason for disbudding is that plants that have been disbudded for a long time really want to bloom. They will give a bigger head of bloom if the timing is right. Timing of bloom is very dependent upon your growing conditions, the type of bloom, and the amount of darkness and light.

Growing conditions have to do with how warm or cold the area is and the amount of humidity. Plants grown cool will take longer to come into bloom than plants grown warm. Blooms on plants grown in high humidity will open more quickly than blooms grown in dryer conditions. Lowering light hours will slow down bloom, and lengthening light hours will speed up the bloom.

Another reason for disbudding is to discourage thrips. Thrips distort blooms and spread disease.

Thrips are attracted to plants that are in bloom.

Some people who are very serious about showing their plants also do something called "disbloom." "Disbloom" is removing the first large bloom on each stem. This tends to cause the rest of the blooms to open together rather than one after the other. Try it on only a few of your plants to see if you like it.

Another question facing those who grow for show is whether or not to use rings to support the leaves of the plant. I have found people who feel strongly both ways. Some feel that leaves grow stronger petioles if not supported, and some feel they need the supports. Try a few plants each way and decide for yourself.

Thus far, I have only mentioned the things that you need to do for the entire life of the plant. There are also things you can only do on the day of the show.

1. Check for suckers — you should have been

removing these all along, but do a last minute check to be sure. A plant with a true sucker (four leaves) will be removed from the show.

2. Using a soft complexion brush, brush from the center to the outer row. Support each leaf as you brush. Dirt on leaves will take off up to one point for each instance.

3. The very last thing you will need to do is check to see that all blooms are fresh and that they are the right color. Remove any that are spent and that are not blooming correctly. Each spent or wrong hue bloom will take off one-half point.

If you have successfully done all of this for six to twelve months, you should be very proud of the plants you have grown and they should do well in the show.

From *The Dixie News*

How Do Self-watering Pots Work?

By Joyce Stork

There are several types of self-watering pots, and different ways to self-water.

1. The two-piece ceramic violet pots commonly found at discount stores work by allowing water to seep through the unglazed part of the inside pot. They may work well, but many growers find that the rate of seepage varies and some plants get too wet while others are too dry. In addition, these pots lack drainage holes, which means that salts cannot be leached out of the potting mix, and you must repot at least yearly to replace the mix.

2. Wick watering is a second method. Self-watering pots that have a wicking reservoir (Dandy Pots or Volkmann Bros. Reservoir Wick Pot) are most commonly found online. Similar systems can be improvised at home using a plastic tub with a lid (with a hole cut in the lid) or screening placed over a tray of water. In these, the pot is placed above a reservoir of water with a nylon or acrylic cord dangling from the pot into the water.

The potting mix must be quite porous (1 part each of sphagnum peat, vermiculite and perlite is recommended) so as to avoid over-saturated soil which can result in rot. These can be watered from the top on occasion to leach out salts.

3. Some growers like a method of capillary mat watering. Here, the pots (again filled with a porous potting mix) are set onto a thick absorbent mat that is saturated with water in a tray. The water makes contact with the bottom of the pot but doesn't inundate the roots.

4. A fourth method is the Oyama pots or "Texas watering." This is a method of planting using a thick layer of perlite at the bottom of the pot through which water can flow without overwhelming the roots. Each grower has to decide which method fits their personal style and budget.

From the FAQ Section of AVSA's Website



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Streptocarpus 'Sweet Ella Bella'

Exhibited by: Majorie Bullard

Wick Watering African Violets

By Ruth Coulson, Australia

From her book, *African Violets for Everyone*

Watering can be the greatest quandary that is faced by the African violet grower. It is right to be cautious.

My ideas on watering have evolved over the longish time I have been growing African violets. Evolved for greater success I hope, and to make the whole thing easier for me.

One thing I still believe is that it doesn't matter how you water, just so long as you do. But remember that "too much" can be just "too bad." In fact, I now understand that the way the plants are watered should be in harmony with the potting mix used.



The larger the granules in the potting mix, the more air it will hold; the smaller the granules, the more moisture it will hold. This is complicated a bit by the fact that some products used in potting mixes, like peat moss and vermiculite, do of themselves hold moisture, but in general it is true. For me, the coarser grained potting mixes allow wick watering without the worry of the roots becoming too wet. So, depending on the ability of your plants to take up water, and for the pot to drain properly, wick watering might also work for you. It is really easy to do and it's simpler for the grower, as well as ensuring an even supply of water for the plant.

So how to do it? The idea is that with a coarse, yet moisture retentive, potting mix you have a wick made of some synthetic material such as nylon or acrylic. The wick makes good contact with the potting mix inside the pot, and emerging through a drain hole in the bottom of the pot, hangs into a supply of water. So long as the potting mix and the wick are moist with water, to begin with, water should be taken up as the plant needs it until the supply is all used up. Leave it a day or so and refill the water.

Just how you arrange this is up to you. A classic method is using a take-away food container as the reservoir, with the plant sitting on the lid, with the wick dangling through a hole in the lid. Dilute (one third to one half strength) liquid African violet fertilizer can be added to the water. That way the plant gets constant feeding and watering together.

If you find that they don't look quite as nice as



you would like, then you can enclose the whole thing (reservoir and pot) in an overpot or basket. Or, there are any number of specialist watering pots on the market. Just do try one or two before going any further to make sure that your plants are going to like the system, and that the pots are going to draw water just how you need them to.

<http://www.africanvioletsforeveryone.net>

Coming Events

March 1 - March 2, 2014 - Texas

Spring Branch AVC 33rd Annual
Spring Show/ Sale
Judson Robinson Jr. Community
Center

2020 Hermann Drive
Houston, TX 77004

Mar 1 - 10am - 4pm

Mar 2 - 10am - 3pm

Info: Karla Ross 281-748-8417

Email: kjwross@yahoo.com

March 8 - California

South Coast AVS Judged Show/Sale
South Coast Botanic Garden
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.

Palos Verde Peninsula, CA

Show: 11:30am - 4pm

Sale: 11am - 4pm

Info: Jacquie Eisenhut

(310) 325-2993

Email: jeisenhut@hotmail.com

March 15 & 16 - Colorado

Rocky Mountain AV Council
Annual Judged Show and Sale
Tagawa Garden Center

7711 S. Parker Road, Centennial CO.

Mar 15 - 9am to 4pm

Mar 16 - 10am to 4pm

Info: NLevine28@msn.com

Website: RMAVC.com

March 21 & 22 - Texas

METRO-TRIO AVS of Dallas
Annual Spring Show/Sale

North Haven Gardens

7700 Northhaven Road, Dallas, Tx

Both Days: 10 am to 4 pm

Info: Bill Foster (972) 279-5993

Email: 1bpffoster@sbcglobal.net

Beverly Powers (972) 690-3619

Email: bvrlypwr@swbell.net?

Mary Corondan (972) 333-4748

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

March 22 & 23 - New York

Sweetwater AVS 39th Judged
Show/Sale

Mar 22 - 2pm - 5pm

Mar 23 - Noon - 4pm

West Sayville Fire Dept

80 Montauk Highway

West Sayville, NY

\$2.00 donation requested

March 22 - Washington

Seattle AVS & Puget Sound Gesneriad
Society

One-Day Annual Show/Sale

Swanson's Nursery

9701 15th Ave NW

Seattle, WA 98117

Sale: 10am - 4pm

Show: Noon - 4pm

For SAVS Info: Jean Chin

seattleafricanvioletociety@yahoo.com

For PSGS Info: Bob Clark

Email: bobclark98122@gmail.com

March 29 & 30 - Illinois

Northern Illinois Gesneriad Society
Display/Sale

Chicago Botanical Garden

1000 Lake Cook Road

Glencoe, IL

Mar 29 - Noon - 4:30pm

Mar 30 - 10am - 4:30pm

Info: Susan Bradford

Email: asusan.bradford@abbvie.com

April 4 & 5 - Texas

First AVS of Wichita Falls Annual
Show/Sale

Apr 4: 2:30pm - 4pm

Apr 5: 10am - 4pm

Fellowship Hall, University United
Methodist Church

3405 Taft Blvd, Wichita Falls, TX

Free of charge

Info: Patty Daniel

patty@ppa.kscoxmail.com

Sue Ramser ramserwf@wf.net

April 4 - 6 - Pennsylvania

AVS of Springfield, Delaware County,
PA

Judged Show/Sale

Granite Run Mall

1067 W. Baltimore Pike, Media, PA
19063

Exhibits: Apr 5: Noon to 9pm

Apr 6: 11 AM - 4 PM

Sales: Apr 4 - Noon - 9pm

Apr 5 - 10am - 9pm

Apr 6 - 11am - 4pm

Info: Alice Dulaney (610-356-7459)

Email: adulaney@verizon.net

April 5 & 6 - New York

Capital District AVS Show/Sale
Voorheesville, NY

Albany Cooperative Extension

24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY

Apr 5 - 1pm - 5pm

Apr 6 - 11am - 4pm

Info: Margaret Califano

518-785-3107

ecalifa1@nycap.n.com

April 5 & 6 - Missouri

Sho-Me AVC

29th Annual Show/ Sale

Loose Park Garden Center

51st Street & Wornall

Kansas City, MO

Apr 5: 9am-3pm

Apr 6: 10am -3pm

Info: Fred & Pat Inbody

(816) 373-6915

E-Mail: kskd1@juno.com

April 11 & 12 - Minnesota

AVS of Minnesota Spring Judged
Show/Sale

Har Mar Mall

Snelling & County Road B

Roseville, MN 55113

Apr 11 - 10am - 7pm

Apr 12 - 10am - 4pm

Info: Barb Wemess

http://sites.google.com/site/avsminne
sota

April 12, 2014 - Delaware

Delaware AVS 48th Annual Show/
Sale

Bosco's Christiana Town Center
Store Auditorium
Route 273 in Christiana, Delaware
Sat 10am - 5pm
Info: Quentin Schlieder 302-653-6449
Email: qcsjr@comcast.net

April 12 - Connecticut

Windsor AVS Annual Judged
Show/Sale
Grace Episcopal Church
311 Broad Street
Windsor, CT 06095
Hours: 8:30 am - 2:30 pm
Info: Nancy Hayes (860) 242-0162
Email: violetnancy@comcast.net
<http://www.windsorafricanviolets.org/>

April 12 - Michigan

Michigan State AVS
Show/ Sale: African Violets/Streps
Hours: 10am - 4pm
Matthaei Botanical Gardens
1800 Dixboro Rd
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Info: Lynn Allen (248) 332-7924
Email: LynnAllen0413@comcast.net

April 12 - Connecticut

Thimble Island AVS Show/Sale
Willoughby Wallace Library
146 Thimble Islands Road,
Exit #56, Branford, CT
Hours: Noon to 3:30 pm
Info: Madeline Clem (203) 481-9455

April 12 & 13 - Virginia

Richmond AVS Judged Show/Sale
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
1800 Lakeside Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23228
Sale: Apr 11 - 1pm - 5pm
Apr 12-13, 9am - 5pm
Show: Apr 12: 1pm - 5pm
Apr 13: 9am - 3pm
Free Admission
Info: Bill Schmidt 804-266-6157
Email: bills.misc@verizon.net

April 12 & 13 - Ohio

Town & Country AVS & North Coast
Gesneriad Club

Judged Shows/Sale
(Shows judged separately)
Cleveland Botanical Gardens
11030 East Blvd.
Cleveland, OH

April 12 - 1PM - 5PM

April 13 - 12PM - 5PM

Plant Sale: April 12 - 9AM - 5PM

April 13 - 12PM - 5PM

Info: Pat Berilla (440) 352-7837

Email:

townandcountryavs@gmail.com

April 19 & 20 - Quebec, Canada

Société des Saintpaulia de Montréal
Annual Judged Show/Sale
Chalet du parc Maisonneuve
4601 Sherbrook Street E.
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Apr 19 - 13:00 - 16:00
Apr 20 - 01:00 - 16:00
Info: www.saintpaulia-montreal.com
Voice Mail: (514) 990-5701
[Facebook.com/SaintpauliaMontreal](https://www.facebook.com/SaintpauliaMontreal)

April 25 & 26 - Tennessee

Memphis AVS Annual Show/Sale
Central Christian Church
531 S. McLean Blvd. at Peabody
Memphis, TN
April 25 - 10am - 5pm
April 26 - 10am - 4pm
Info: Ann Shirley
Email: Ann9777@att.net

April 25 & 26 - New Jersey

Bergen County AVS
Show and Plant Sale
Apr 25 - 3pm - 9pm
Apr 26 - 9am - 3pm
Old North Reformed Church
120 Washington Ave.
Dumont, NJ 07628
Info: violets101@yahoo.com
Facebook: Bergen County African
Violet Society

April 25-27 - Iowa

Evening AV Club of Des Moines
Show/ Sale
Apr 25 - Noon - 9pm Sale
Apr 26 Mall hours

April 27 Noon - 4pm
Merle Hay Mall
3850 Merle Hay Road
Des Moines, IA
Website: Des Moines Evening African
Violet Club
Email: mcountrykathy@aol.com

April 26 - Oregon

Portland AV & Mount Hood
Gesneriad Club Sale/ Display
Apr 26: 10am - 2pm
Tabor Heights Methodist Church
6161 SE Stark St
Portland OR 97045
Info: 503-631-3925
Email: alicemaebblue@yahoo.com

April 26 & 27 - New York

AVGSS of Syracuse
Beaver Lake Nature Center
8477 East Mud Lake Road
Baldwinsville, NY 13027
Apr 26 - 1pm - 6pm
Apr 27 - 10am - 4pm
\$3.00 parking fee
Info: Ann Kelly
Email: AKelly002@twcny.rr.com

April 26 & 27, 2014

Columbus AVS 65th Annual
Show/Sale
Sale: Apr 26: 10am - 5pm, Apr 27
10am - 4pm
Show: Apr 26: Noon - 5pm, Apr 27
10am - 4pm
Franklin Park Conservatory &
Botanical Gardens
1777 East Broad St
Columbus, Ohio 43203
Info: Cathy Willis (614) 847-0676
Email: plants4us@wideopenwest.com

April 26 - California

Montrose and Burbank Societies
Judged Show/Sale
Descanso Gardens
1418 Descanso Drive
La Canada Flintridge, CA 91011
Apr 26 - 10am - 4pm
Info: Susan Eyraud (818)-951-3597
Email: susaneyraud@yahoo.com

April 26 & 27 – Massachusetts

Bay State AVS Judged Show
Hours: 10am – 5pm
Tower Hill Botanic Gardens
11 French Drive
Boylston, MA 01505
Info: Carol Hess, Show Chair
Email: violets999@aol.com

May 3 – British Columbia

Vancouver AV & Gesneriad Society
Annual Show/ Sale
Floral Hall, VanDusen Garden
5251 Oak St, Vancouver, BC
1pm – 4pm
Info: Iain James
Email: jhoya02@shaw.ca

May 3 & 4 – Ohio

Cincinnati AVS
Annual Judged Show/ Sale
Eastgate Mall
Interstate 275 & State Route 32

Cincinnati, OH

May 3, Noon – 9 pm
May 4, Noon – 6 pm
Contact: Penny Wichman
Email: pennypwic@aol.com
Or: Al Cenci
Email: acenci@cinci.rr.com

May 3 & 4 – Wisconsin

Oshkosh Violet Society
Annual Judged Show/ Sale
St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall
531 Knapp St.
Oshkosh, WI
May 3 – 10am–4:30pm
May 4 – 11:30am–3:00pm
Info: Kevin Degner
(920)426-3764
Email: kevin_degner@sbcglobal.net

**May 10 – Wisconsin**

Crosstown AVC
Annual Spring Sale
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave
Madison, WI 53704
Hours: 9am – 4pm
Info: Alice Peterson
(608)298-7324
Email: peters56@tds.net

May 10 – New Jersey

African Violet Club of Burlington County
Annual Judged Show and Sale
Noon – 5pm
Medford Leas Retirement Community
1 Medford Leas Way
Medford, New Jersey
Free Admission
Info: sskalski@comcast.net
AVCBC.PBWorks.com

A TRIP TO THE HOLTkamp GREENHOUSES OF ISSELBURG, GERMANY

By Julie Jones

President Ohio State AVS

A number of years ago, after graduating from college, and before marrying and starting a family, I spent a month traveling through Europe. With a map and Eurail pass in hand, I saw some amazing sites. What I recall most vividly from that trip were the picturesque views and historic buildings.

My travels started in Amsterdam. I was a new grower then, and high on my list of places to see was the Holtkamp Greenhouses in Isselburg, Germany, located 90 miles due east of Amsterdam. I was so excited when I called there and talked to someone who spoke fluent English (as I speak no German) and inquired if a visit could be arranged. "Yes, we would love to have you" was the reply, as well instructions on how to get there.

Starting at the Central Station in Amsterdam, I

travelled by train crossing into Germany. The farther into rural Germany I was, the fewer people I encountered who spoke English. A fair amount of gesturing and map pointing by helpful and friendly locals, three trains, and two bus rides later, I had arrived!

The greenhouses seemed to go on forever. Each housed hundreds of blooming violets. Yellow, prior to its release a few short years later, was the only color not represented.

How hard it was to leave there empty handed! There was no room for violets in a backpack full of provisions for a month of travel.

I look forward to another trip to the Holtkamp Greenhouses in Nashville during our AVSA convention. Getting there will be much easier than traveling to Germany. Only one bus ride needed!



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Ness' Pink Candy

Exhibited by: Richard Nicholas

Hybridized by: D. Ness

Standard

The African Violet Plant and Its Parts

The terms that refer to African violets, used in the AVSA HANDBOOK, are listed below. An illustration of a whole African violet and its separate parts is on the facing page. African violet plants are made up of **blossoms** (flowers) and a rosette of **foliage** (leaves) attached to a **crown** (a single thick stem). The African violet **trailers** and some of the **Saintpaulia species** (the original wild African violets) have **multiple-crowns** (several stems coming from the same roots) and tend to trail or grow sideways.

Plants are registered as **large, standard, semi-miniature, or miniature**, and trailers can be standard, semiminiature, or miniature. The plants themselves often grow larger or smaller than expected. A micromini is the affectionate name given to the very tiny African violets that are sometimes

less than an inch across. Types of foliage and blossoms are shown on the opposite page.

The numbers or letters used below refer to numbers or letters used in the drawings on the opposite page

1. A **blossom** is a collection of plant parts that is responsible for seed production (sexual reproduction). The blossom is made up of **sepals** (a), **petals** (b), **stamens** (c), **ovary** (d), **style**

(e), and **stigma** (f). The **stamens**, tipped with **anthers** (g) which carry **pollen** (h) shown speckled on the blossom, are considered the male part. The **pistil** (i), which consists of the ovary, style, and stigma and produces the seeds, is considered the female part.

2. A **bud** is an unopened or partly opened blossom. In an AVSA show, it can not count as a blossom except in the New Cultivar classes.

3. A **bloom stalk** is a spray of blossoms on a stem that grows between the leaves.

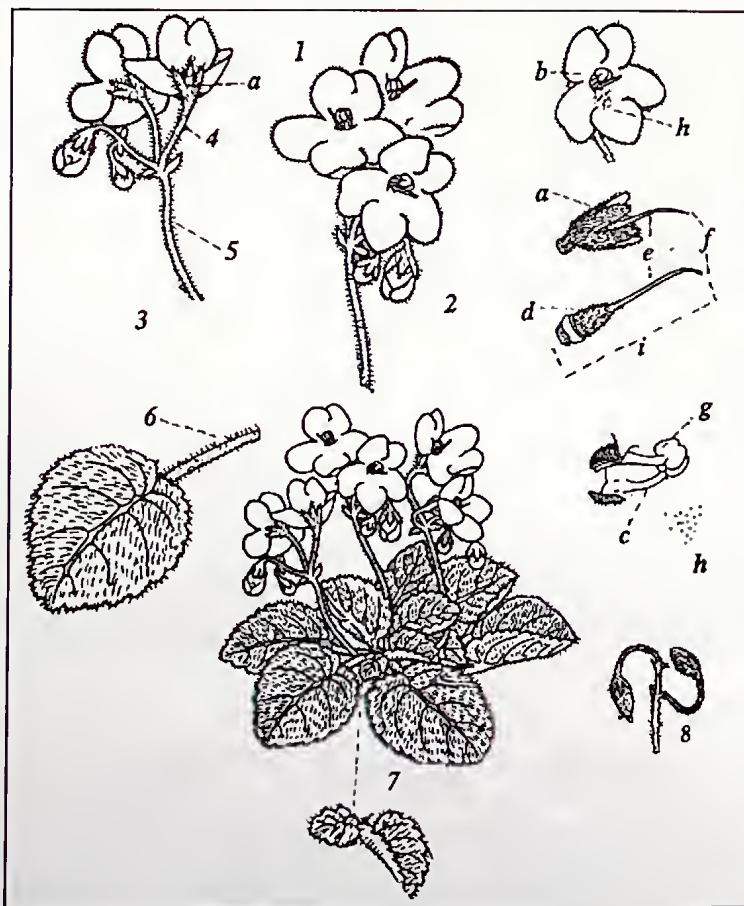
4. A **pedicel** is the stem supporting an individual blossom or bud in a cluster.

5. A **peduncle** is the stem that supports the entire blossom cluster.

6. A **petiole** is the stem that connects the blade of the leaf to the crown.

7. A **sucker** is the beginning of a new crown. Some bloom stalks start out with small leaves but should show evidence of a bud by the time four leaves have formed. Suckers should be removed when very small on single-crown plants and encouraged on multiple-crown plants.

8. **Seed pods** are the result of the fertilization of eggs in an ovary with pollen from the same or different plant



From the AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges

Improving Your Point Score

By John Nabers

To earn a blue ribbon, a specimen plant must be well grown with proper symmetry. Growing near perfection requires months of painstaking effort. There are, however, various activities that can be performed during the last three to four weeks before a show to significantly improve the point score of a plant you have decided to exhibit. Often during judging, comments are made such as "if only..." or "this would be a blue ribbon entry, if..." Conscientious, final grooming can eliminate reasons for these comments.

Before expending time and effort to grow a specimen for show read the printed description at least once. A plant not true to the hybridizer's description, no matter how well-grown or how flawless it is, yields the grower an automatic deduction that diminish the entry from blue to red ribbon. Read the Master Variety List or other hybridizer list that has its printed description. Do not guess. Research and compare. Anyone can write the wrong name on a plant container. Verify that the plant is correctly named and growing true to variety.

Disbloom the plant three to four weeks before a show. Do not be confused with disbudding. Any blossom open three weeks before a show will not be fresh at show time. So, very carefully remove just open blossoms from the bloomstem about three weeks before show. Disbloom allows the plant to put all its energy into the remaining buds. An ample quantity of fresh blossoms is preferred to a massive cluster of blossoms with spent or faded blossoms intermixed with the fresh ones.

To check for symmetry, place your show plant on the floor. Look down at it and see if it has a symmetrical rosette pattern to its leaf growth. There may not be adequate time to correct significant defects before the show. However, gently adjust leaves so that all leaves are evenly distributed. Use a pick stick to control a troublesome leaf for a few days if necessary. Be careful not to break any leaf stems. If lower leaves are hidden by upper

leaves when looking straight down on your plant, remove the lower leaves. If the lower leaves do not add to the plant symmetry then points are deducted from an entry for having unnecessary leaves. Perhaps the entire outer row of leaves should be removed to provide the best symmetry. Remove all marred, yellow, and immature leaves if possible, without distorting symmetry. (A defective leaf is one point deduction whereas a break in symmetry is a three point deduction.)

Inspect to be sure that your plant is well-centered in its container, or points are deducted. Make sure that its container is about one-third the diameter of the plant, or points are deducted. During this investigation, check that the plant does not have a neck from leaf removal which causes point deduction. The pot should be clean, full of mix, and conform to the rules of the show schedule.

While grooming your plant, use a good strong light. Examine the specimen carefully for stubs where bloom stems or leaves were removed. Wash off residue from fertilizers or insecticides. Pick off human or pet hairs. Brush off soil particles, dust and dirt, and remove picks. This step is probably the most important of all last-minute detail work, because a year or more of grooming and growing a show plant can be wasted if the plant has not been properly cleaned up before judging.

These last minute tips on grooming are elementary. If the exhibitor carefully follows each step maybe comments will not be made such as "if only..." during the judging of the next show. All show specimen start out with 100 points. The lack of meticulous grooming causes the deduction of points that reduce that total points below the number required for a blue ribbon. I know of no judge who would not prefer to give all blue ribbons, if they could.

From *The Dixie News*, publication of the Dixie AVS



Photo Credit. Neil Lipson

Fiery Trail

Exhibited by: Sandy Skalski

Hybridized by: B. Elkin

Semiminiature Trailer



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

Rob's Outer Orbit

Exhibited by: Paula Bal

Hybridized by: R. Robinson

Semiminiature

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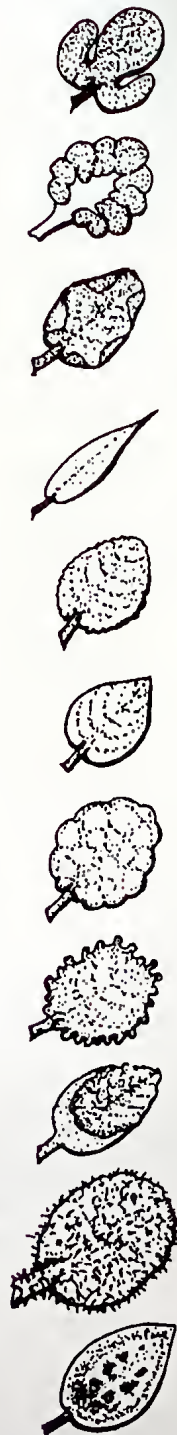
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On this cover:

Optimara My Desire

Exhibited by: **Elmer Godeny**

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By John T. Carter, President

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

A big "thank you" to the 200 plus members who have registered for the Nashville convention in a timely manner. That has been a big help to Amy and her work flow in the office. It is not too late to register, so if you have not completed this little task, please get to it soon. The convention is right around the corner.

I know our show committees have been well organized and are working to make this a great show. I encourage all of you to bring one or more exhibits and participate in the show. Last year was excellent with at least 30% of the attendees participating in the show. It is a great experience and can be rewarding with real cash awards.

The Internet and Membership and Promotion Committees have been especially busy this past year. If you have not been to the website lately, it is time for you to take a look and see the new items that have been added. You can now report the results from your show online to "The Winners Are .." and to "Tally Time" in minutes and submit them without any trip to the mail box and paying for postage. Recently we added your submission of "Best Varieties" to the online process. Shortly, if not already announced, the procedure for submission of photos will be listed on the website. All submitted photos may not be added, but a review panel will evaluate the photos to see that they are close to matching their description in the Master Variety List, if they are listed. Photos should not be "photo shopped".

At our 2015 convention we will be electing



officers again. We need nominations from which the Nominating Committee can choose a slate for your vote. The position of Director is a great starting place for members desiring to serve AVSA. Directors are elected for a 3 year term. You are required to attend the annual Board of Directors meeting normally held on Wednesday the week of the convention. Yes, you will still

have time to enter your exhibits. Nominations are also needed for the position of Treasurer, Secretary and Third Vice President. These terms are for 2 years, but the Secretary and Treasurer may serve more than one term. Application forms will be available at the convention, and you will find one of the officers willing to give you more information about serving in these positions.

I hear a lot about AVSA needing to do something, generally relating to adopting new technologies. AVSA is not a GM or Microsoft; we are a volunteer run organization with limited resources. We are fortunate to have many good volunteers, but they are also limited in time and resources. YOU are part of AVSA. If you see something that needs to be done AND YOU are willing to help achieve that something, contact me or any of the officers and we will get your effort coordinated with the various committees so that YOU will be part of the solution.

Pack your exhibits carefully for their trip to Nashville. Help them look their best for the judge!

John



Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

The Nashville Convention is only a few weeks away, and from the amount of those registered, this convention has more of our members coming than in the previous six years.

I know many that many members, including Amy and I, are excited about the tours to the Holtkamp Greenhouses. I've read articles, and have seen pictures about the fantastic greenhouses through the years I've been with AVSA, and it will be nice to actually see them in person.

I am hoping that spring has really arrived. Our temperatures were in the very high 70s a couple of weekends ago, when I enjoyed digging in my flowerbeds. I planted Impatiens and Mandevilla vines, and then the temperature dropped into the 50s! I dragged all the potted plants back inside, and covered up everything in the beds, and hoped for the best. This weekend, it was in the low 80s, so I planted even more. I do love a full summer garden, and hope next winter isn't as harsh as the last one. I like it when my annuals come back year after year...including the impatiens.

The plants in my office are doing well. Both of my sinningias '*Charles Lawn speciosa*' are again huge in size. One of them has produced twenty-four flower buds, and the other, eighteen. The flowers are so large when they bloom, I'll have to use florist's wire to hold them up. My two African violets, 'Happy Harold,' and an Optimara 'No Name,' are blooming nicely, and the trailer that I keep saying I'm going to repot, and never get around to doing it, is so nice and full that it is probably needs a much larger pot. I really can't tell you the size of the pot, as I haven't seen it in a few years. The plant has made sure that the pot is no longer visible, and I hate to disturb it, as it really seems to enjoying growing there.

My plant of *Streptocarpus* 'Radar's Ruthie,' a gift from hybridizer, Ray Pittman, has seven open blossoms and eleven buds! What a wonderful plant! Thanks, Ray!

AVSA President, **John Carter**, and his lovely



wife, Judy, paid us a visit in April, on their way to the Dixie Convention in Baton Rouge. We enjoyed visiting with them, and joining them for lunch at one of the best Cajun restaurants in the area. John even changed out some of the fluorescent bulbs for us.

As John and Judy were getting ready to leave, **Ruth Goeke** and **Jane Rexilius** dropped by the office, also on their way to Baton Rouge.

If you are passing through SE Texas, please give us a call and stop by for a visit.

Our good friend, and tireless worker for AVSA, **Thelma Miller**, passed away in 2013.

Although I had run a brief memorial about Thelma in an earlier issue, I wanted to share Marge Savage's tribute to Thelma, upon her receiving the AVSA Continuing Service Award.

Ruth

Remembering Thelma Miller

Thelma's willingness to give herself for the good of the African Violet Society is well-known. As Chair of the AVSA Ways and Means Committee for six years, Thelma encouraged her local club of nimble fingers and fancy doers to create needlepoint pin holders, tote bags, and other fun convention goodies.

Thelma was a member of Columbus AVS, Ohio State AVS, and AVSA, each for 36 years. She served as AVSA Show Chair at Columbus in 1992 and at Cincinnati in 2005. A Senior Judge, Thelma had served as President, Show Chairman, and prepared community horticultural displays and programs, multiple times, in all of her memberships. AVSA benefitted greatly from Thelma's work ethic. For six additional years, Thelma worked tirelessly for AVSA, handling the tee-shirt order and Ways and Means table at the yearly conventions.

In 2013, Thelma was awarded the Continuing Service Award as an acknowledgement of her dedication to AVSA.

Marge Savage, Awards Chair

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

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About Blue in African Violets

By Ruth Coulson

From her E-Newsletter The African Violet Way

www.africanvioletsforeveryone.net

There is no "real" blue in African violets. All growers eventually realize that the blue African violet is always slightly more towards the red colors – we have lavender, mauve, violet, and purple, all in varying intensity, some more towards blue than others, but none ever getting there.

If you see photographs of African violets in a striking, really blue color, then the photographer

has had difficulty in getting color accurate. It happens.

"True" blue just doesn't exist in African violets – but do we care?

At this stage, I, at least, have seen so many African violets in their own interpretation of blue to say that is enough for me! Let the "true" blue be for delphiniums and such.



Photo Credit: Ralph Robinson

Rob's Ditzi Mitzi

Hybridized and grown by: Ralph Robinson
Semiminiature Chimera



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In Search of New Violets

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A topic that was discussed recently on one of the African violet Internet groups was a lament that some of the older cultivars such as the "original 10," and other older plants were losing their vigor and appeared to be dying out. There appeared to be a general agreement from those participating in the discussion that this was a real phenomenon, and participants wondered about the cause and what might be done to preserve these heritage plants. Here are a couple of ideas about this situation:

1. Plants produced repeatedly through leaf cuttings are likely to accumulate small genetic changes or mutations over time. Leaf cuttings are reproduced from single cells in the epidermis or skin of the leaf petiole. These single cells can be slightly different from the original plant. Over the generations, the small changes add up and the resulting plants are indeed different from the original cultivar.

2. Our cultural conditions are different now than they were when these cultivars were developed. Our soil mixes are different; we grow almost entirely under artificial light (the "original 10" for example, were developed in greenhouse growing conditions), our water has different chemicals in it, and our fertilizers are different, just to mention a few changes. We know that African violets are highly susceptible to cultural conditions. It shouldn't be surprising that the older cultivars grow "differently" than they used to since we are no longer using the same cultural conditions they were developed and grown in historically.

In light of these genetic changes and cultural changes, how can we better preserve our heritage plants? A couple of ideas might be the following:

1. Reproduce the plants from suckers and crown cuttings. These have a higher chance of genetic stability to the original type than leaf cuttings.

2. Take leaf cuttings only when necessary in order to reduce the number of genetic changes introduced through each generation of reproduction.

3. Try reproducing the original growing conditions that these heritage plants were developed under. If the plant was originally developed and grown under natural light conditions, keep it on a windowsill rather than under artificial lights. Many of the older issues of the *African Violet Magazine* listed very different soil mixtures than what we use today. Try to replicate some of these soil mixtures for growing your heritage plants. Also try reducing the amount of fertilizer given to heritage plants. I suspect that we probably "overfeed" our plants today with chemicals, rather than using manure tea and other more natural fertilizers of past years.

The changes in our heritage plants are certainly a real problem, and I'm glad to see the issue being discussed. Hopefully, those who are growing and conserving these plants might take some of these suggestions under consideration.

Q: Is dropping flowers a genetic recessive trait that is linked to single blooms? I'm puzzled because I recently acquired a hybrid that has full double flowers, yet they drop after a few days.

A: Generally, dropping flowers are considered to be a genetic recessive to the dominant trait of not dropping. In most cases, the trait is also linked with petal number. For example, single petal plants such as in the original species were always droppers. It wasn't until mutations for semi-dou-

ble or double petaled plants appeared that non-dropping flowers became common. Some growers might recall that one of the breakthroughs developed by the Holtkamp Greenhouses was the Ballet series of African violets that didn't drop their flowers. Consequently, we expect droppers to be single-petaled flowers, and non-droppers to be double-petaled flowers.

However, it is possible for linked genetic traits to become "unlinked" or separate from each other. A recent example is that between bustled foliage and wasp blooms. Generally, bustled foliage and wasp flower types occurred together, but we now have plants that have one or the other.

What I suspect you might be seeing in your cultivar is a similar "unlinked" combination of dropping flowers and double petals. The flowers have extra petals, which should mean that the flowers will stick and not drop. However, it appears that your plant does carry the trait for dropping. I'm guessing that the flowers don't drop as readily as the flowers of the species plants. They probably hang on until the flower is dying, then drop off. If the plant had other good characteristics, the hybridizer might have "overlooked" the dropping trait. Personally, I would recommend that hybridizers eliminate any seedlings with the dropping trait, but I can see situations where a very unique color combination, flower pattern, etc., might tempt a hybridizer to keep a dropper.

Q: One of my seedlings has been through two

blooming cycles without any signs of dropping the flowers. Now in the third blooming cycle, some of the flowers are dropping. Is this plant a dropper, or not?

A: Further conversation with the hybridizer revealed that the plant in question had pansy (violet) shaped flowers and not star-shaped flowers. My experience has been that star shaped flowers will generally show dropping flowers very easily if they carry the trait. However, pansy-shaped flowers may sometimes be a little bit intermediate in expressing the trait for dropping. The flowers may drop at times, but not at others. The hybridizer indicated that the plant seemed to hang on to the flowers well until the flowers were very mature or if the plant was roughly shaken. I think this is how the plant didn't show the dropping trait until the third blooming cycle. It may be heterozygous, or a mixed hybrid, for the dropping/not dropping trait. If the flowers are singles (as was true in this seedling) then the plant may show an intermediate tendency to drop the flowers. If the trait had been combined with semi-double or double flowers, the seedling would like have been seen as a non-dropper.

Here again I would usually recommend not keeping this seedling unless it showed other highly desirable traits. There are plenty of other plants out there to keep a "sometimes" flower dropper in cultivation.

Definitions/Explanations

From: The Lonestar AV Council Newsletter

Disbud: Removing all bloom/bud stems from the time of repotting until the established date to end disbudding. The most common time frame for stopping disbudding is 7-8 weeks before show, leaving time for the plant to come back to full bloom in time for show. Of course, a grower may know that some varieties come back quickly or are slower to come back (like some heavily variegated varieties) and adjust the timing accordingly.

Major Grooming: At this four-week point, most plants are coming back into bud. The major groom-

ing is the time to remove any extra leaves and, especially, to bring bud stems up between leaves and push leaves down into place.

Bloom Booster: If you choose to "boost bloom" use a high phosphorous (middle number) fertilizer during this time period. Standards generally respond better than the little ones. Starting ten weeks before show is necessary for the phosphorous to have an impact. Stopping on time can prevent the yellowing which can occur if a plant stays too long on a lower nitrogen/high phosphorous fertilizer.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Roulette

Exhibited by: Penny Smith-Kerker

Hybridized by: L. Egenites

Standard Chimera



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Mac's Coral Carillion

Exhibited by: Gary Thurman

Hybridized by: G. Macdonald

Miniature

Who Will Serve?

By John Carter, AVSA President

In conformance with the AVSA by-laws, elections of Directors are held every year. Five Directors are elected to serve for three years at each annual convention. Their nominations are presented to the board members and an election is held at the Annual Membership Meeting. At the installation banquet at this year's convention, we will see five new Directors installed. The Nominating Committee selected these five from applications that members submitted. The members had to provide the names of three references that would vouch for their service and dedication to African violet society activities. The applicants agree they will attend the board meetings held during their term of office. They will also serve on at least one of the standing committees. An application to become a Director can be found on the website on the membership pages.

Every four years, an election is held for all of the leadership positions defined in the by-laws. The terms of service are spelled out there. The President, First Vice President, Second VP, and Third VP are limited to a term of two years. The Secretary and Treasurer can serve no more than four consecutive terms if they request to do so. Normally, the only applicant for the position of President is the First VP, the applicant for Second VP is the Third VP, and a new applicant is found for the position of Third VP. This progression allows the officers to develop experience as they move up the progression. Generally, a person that starts this progression plans on continuing it, but they do not have to.

Applications for Third VP, Secretary, and Treasurer are needed for the Nominating Committee. The applications should be submitted before or

during the convention. The Nominating Committee will meet some time during the convention to check to see that they have applicants for each position. If not, they will start roaming the halls and gathering names.

Today I put the question before you, "*Who will serve?*" I have heard and read comments that the AVSA leadership is still in the 20th century and fails to recognize newer technologies and ways of moving the organization forward. There may be some element of truth to this. There is hope, though. We are seeing younger members at our convention. We are getting some new volunteers as Directors. We need more to step forward and volunteer to serve on committees, which is an excellent way to get started.

But many of those that put forth the argument that we are "behind the times" have told us that they do not have time (or want to take the time) to serve as a volunteer and help make needed changes. So what are we to do?

"Will **you** serve?" This is a volunteer organization. You will NOT be paid for your time or reimbursed for your personal expenses. Committees can present the need for a budget to accomplish their work and they will be reimbursed for those types of budgeted expenses. All committee members do not have to attend the annual convention, but attendance at the convention improves the team work and the enthusiasm for serving AVSA, so we do encourage this.

Email me at president@avsa.org if you have any questions or need help in making an application to serve AVSA in any capacity. Please join us in our effort to keep our organization fresh and growing!



AVSA – Building Maintenance Fund

*Susan Hapner – Chairman • 35 Ridge Point Dr. – Chesterfield, MO 63017
Building Maintenance Fund 1 February 2014 to 31 March 2014*

Multicolor



Delores Gibb

*In memory of Aloha Rhodes,
my convention roommate for many
years.*

Two-tone



Mel Grice

AVS of Minnesota

San Mateo AVS/TX

In memory of Aloha Rhodes

1st Austin AVS/TX

In memory of Aloha Rhodes

Judith Hess

In memory of Mickey Eberle

Columbus AVS/OH

Thumbprint



Doreen Hassan

Jan Mittag

Metro St. Louis AVC

DoDe Whitaker

Ann Wang

Lynda Vaillancourt

Robert Kurzynski

JoAnne Schrimsher

Judy Walton

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Jo's Violets

James Schade

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Diane Reinke

Debbie McInnis

Stephen Barber

Ernest Stall

Marion Hamtil

Kathleen Hartley

Josane Wagner

Hans Inpijn

Joan Wilson

Stephanie Jeffrey

Florence Naylor

Geneva



Susan Storey

In memory of Aloha Rhodes

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African Violets Love Humidity

By Melvin J. Robey

From his book: African Violets Gifts From Nature

For Flowering, African Violets Love Humidity.

In their native environment, African violets enjoy the luxury of moist, humid tropical conditions. Humidity of 70 to 90 percent is commonplace, and the plants respond with gorgeous arrays of blossoms, adding a touch of elegance to the meadows and valleys of the mountains of Africa.

Humidity around African violets grown indoors is very seldom as high as that of the tropical lands of their origin. In the winter time, the humidity in a home is often as low as 20 to 30 percent, while in the summer it may rise to 55 percent or higher. For

African violets to continually produce flowers they prefer humidity in the range of 50 to 70 percent.

One way to increase the humidity around the plants is to mist their leaves with a fine spray. For this to be a refreshing experience for the African violets, the water must be tepid and not sprayed on so heavily that it runs down into the crown of the plant. This could lead to crown rot disease.

Another way to increase the humidity is to fill containers with water and set them among the plants. The plants will react favorably to the evaporating moisture.

Bob's Purrry Purple: Biography of a Seedling

By Ben Haning, First Nighters Group, Dallas TX
From the Newsletter of the Lone Star AV Council



Ben Haning with Bob's Purrry Purple
Best New Cultivar, LSAVC 201
(photo by M. Bullard)

The story of the seedling begins with an order of African violet seeds from Nadeau African Violet Seeds, nadeausafricanvioletseed.com. A packet of standard African violet seeds and the recommended germination potting mix were delivered in August of 2010. The germination medium was mixed with a small amount of water in a recycled plastic deli meat container. The soil was smoothed with the back of a teaspoon, and the tiny, black seeds were sprinkled over the surface of the soil. A plastic wrap cover was placed over the seeds' new home and secured with a rubber band.

After several weeks of checking the soil daily, the first little seedlings germinated. At first they looked like little green specks of algae on the soil surface. In the weeks ahead, the plantlets grew large enough to transplant to 3-oz plastic cups. The larger seedlings were placed individually in the 3-oz cups, and the smaller ones were placed in groups of three in the 3-oz cups.

About six months after sowing the seeds, the first blossoms began to open. There were a variety of blossoms: pansies, stars, singles and dou-

bles. The blossom colors ranged from purple to blue to pink to white to bicolor. One seedling had a really neat lavender blossom with a dark purple edge. It also had nice foliage that was slightly wavy and had good symmetry. This plant with the dark purple-edged blossom had some good qualities, so it was allowed to stay on the Floracart stand in the kitchen.



Seedlings beginning to emerge. (photo by B. Haning)

Over the months ahead, about 50 seedlings bloomed. Some were just plain purple or blue, too ordinary to keep. Some had foliage that was so wavy that it was unruly. These plants with inferior foliage or ordinary blossoms found their way to the compost pile next to the vegetable garden just beyond the kitchen window. Only a few of the seedlings had nice symmetrical show foliage and interesting blossoms. Over the months and years, the standard with the nice, big, wavy, symmetrical foliage and pretty lavender blossoms kept its place on the top shelf of the Floracart.

The seedling out-grew its 3-oz pot and was moved to a 3-inch pot and then to a 4-inch pot and then to a 4.5-inch pot and finally a 5-inch pot. It grew from a tiny green speck on the surface of the soil to a 24-inch diameter show plant by the end of its third year. It had been kept disbudded for years now. Finally it was time to let it bloom. The Lone Star African Violet Council Show was 7 weeks

away when the disbudding stopped. The biggun' began to send up lots of flower stalks, and by the week of the show in late October 2013, it was in full bloom.



Leaves from Bob's Purrrty Purple at time for show
(photo by B Haning)

The ride to the show was interesting for the seedling because there were no Rubbermaid tubs large enough to safely carry it to Kerrville, so an old computer box was procured from the dusty attic. The big seedling barely fit in the large cardboard box, and its blossoms were too tall to close the box flaps.

On the way to Kerrville, the seedling was discussed and names were suggested for the big standard. The seedling had grown up in a house that was ruled by a really nice cat named Bob. It seemed appropriate to name this violet after Bob. After much discussion, the seedling had its name, Bob's

Purrrty Purple. Bob the cat would purr with pride to know he had such a nice plant named after him.

The seedling was entered in the show and was awarded Best New Cultivar. It was a proud day for the seedling that had begun life in a recycled deli meat container. Being on the head table with so many other beautiful violets was exciting.



Bob's Purrrty Purple - Best New Cultivar LS201

After the show and the long ride home, leaves were taken off Bob's Purrrty Purple to grow another generation of plants. The big standard was reported and returned to its favorite spot on the top shelf of the Floracart. Bob's well-trained staff serve him canned cat food several times a day across the kitchen from the plant stand. Life is good here for Bob the cat and for the big violet named Bob's Purrrty Purple.

Note on Heavy Potting Mixes

By Ruth Coulson

From her E-Newsletter *The African Violet Way*
www.africanvioletsforeveryone.net

We often talk of "heavy" potting mix not being suitable for African violets.

Note that in this context heavy does not really mean "weighs a lot," but means "holds a lot of water." If the ingredients themselves are light (perlite, vermiculite, peat moss) but a plant in the pot seems heavy, it might be too wet. If the ingredients themselves are quite weighty, then this is not necessarily the case.

Some years ago, I carried out an experiment to

prove this point. For the granular part of the mix, I used small aquarium gravel which itself holds no moisture, and for the moisture holding part of the mix I used chopped sphagnum moss. The plants in my experiment grew very well, but they were very "heavy" to lift. They did not hold too much water, though. This was a heavy mix that was absolutely satisfactory for the plants. There was one problem, though; it was really difficult to ensure that the heavy pebbles were evenly distributed throughout the sphagnum moss.

AVSA BOOSTER FUND

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"And the winners are ..." 434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

By Mary J. Corondan

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

You can now submit your "And the winners are...." report online. Go to the AVSA website, avsa.org. Click on the "For Members" tab near the top of the page. Enter your member id and password. An index will appear titled, "Member Content." Scroll down to "Show Reports." You can choose whether to fill out the "And the winners are...." report and submit it online or download the form to print, mail or email. A confirmation email will be sent to those who submit the "And the winners are...." form online or via email. Hopefully many clubs will choose this method to submit their show winners for publication in the African Violet Magazine.



AFRICAN VIOLET COUNCIL OF FLORIDA, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Royal Flair, Rhapsodie Clementine, Wrangler's Spanish Cavalier; Best in Show/Best Standard: Rhapsodie Clementine, **Christel Collier**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Boo Man, Irish Flirt, Dark Kiss; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Sharon Gartner**. Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid, **Martha Spyridon**. Best Semiminiature: Jolly Maiden, **Daniela Wyatt**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5a clone *grandifolia* No. 299, **Carolee Carter**. Best **Gesneriad**: *Columnea* 'Frosty Hills', **Phyllis King**. Best Design, **Mary Lou Harden**.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Red Summit

Exhibited by: Ben Haning

Hybridized by: S. Sorano/L.Lyon Greenhouses

Standard

2014 VACATION GUIDE

These AVSA commercial members would be happy to have you visit them when you are in their area. They are listed here by state. Please carefully note the contact in-

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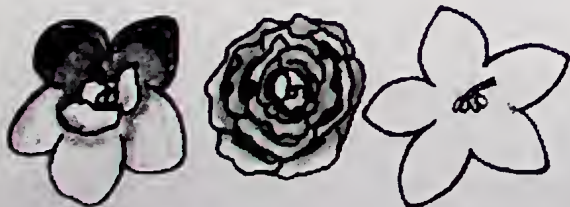
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SUMMER CARE

Kerry Knight

With summer approaching we take care of ourselves when we go outside in the heat and try to stay cool on hot days, so our violets also suffer with the heat and should be given care over these months.

If growing in natural light, either on a windowsill or near a window, it may be necessary to move your plants during the time the sun is coming in the window. Alternatively you may choose to use the likes of a sheer curtain or if you have an outdoor blind or drapes, keep them closed until the sun moves off your plants, otherwise you will find your plants will develop brown patches of sunburn.

For those growing under lights on the very hot days, either reduce your number of hours or turn them off, depending on the day. Try using a fan to

circulate the air, having it oscillating and not blowing directly on to the plants. If you have air conditioning in the same room as your plants, make sure that they are not in a direct line of cold air.

When humidity is low try misting your plants with hot water, holding the spray bottle 30 cm from the leaves. This increases humidity and lowers temperature. Or, you may choose to place bowls of water amongst your plants.

Plants require a lot more water during this period, so it is a good idea to reduce the amount of fertilizer to prevent fertilizer burn. Check your reservoirs regularly, and if top watering keep a close eye on your plants.

Dimetris *Streptocarpus*
from Hybridizer Pavel Enikeev



Streptocarpus 'DS Baby Chick'



Streptocarpus 'DS Aphrodisiac'



Streptocarpus 'DS Golden Key'



Streptocarpus 'DS Horus'

High Voltage Violets Part 2

By William Scheick

Contributing Editor, *Texas Gardener Magazine*

VIOLET EMOTIONS

Such vigilance yields rich rewards, and not just lush flowering plants. Penny might joke about being obsessive-compulsive over her fuzzy-leaved charges, yet she also speaks glowingly about her time with them. "Generally, I find it very calming and relaxing to work with my plants. I always tell my family, which includes two boys, that I'm going to 'play with my plants.' My African violets don't talk back, don't ask for money or the car keys, and when they really aggravate me, I can just throw them out!"

Sometimes that can be easier said than done, Marge acknowledged. "These are my babies. The first time I suspected I had a 'bug,' I was literally sick! I ran for my Sunset guidebook *How to Grow African Violets* and, yes, my plant was sick!" Now, what to do, she worried. It was her first and favorite African violet — an 'Optimara Trinidad' with lovely white-edged lavender flowers. "I took it outside and doused the mealy-bug infected top and root ball in malathion. It smelled so bad that I left it on the warm, shaded front porch to drip dry. But I forgot it overnight when the temperature fell below 55° F. By morning, my favorite plant was gone, and I was crushed."

That's not the end of the story, though. Marge clipped and rinsed between twelve and eighteen leaves that seemed to be still alive, and she put them in plastic bags for warmth. Later she "potted each one in a 2 ½-inch pot filled with vermiculite (for West Texas). They all made it, resulting in many babies which were given away, sold at plant sales or kept."

"Some people would have tossed a sick plant into a Dumpster," Marge admitted. "Not me! I always try to bring it back. That's where you learn great lessons! Some growers feel as if letting one go is like killing someone. When separating the many new babies from one 'mother leaf' to make new plants, some growers *cannot* throw any extras away. We are creating! There is something vis-

ceral about it."

Maybe that's how Anne has arrived at the 500 violets creating "a wonderful oxygen-rich environment" in a guest and a master bedroom in Denton. She finds that "after a long day of work, spending a little time potting or grooming the plants can be very relaxing. African violets respond to care with new growth and more blooms — almost as if they are grateful."

For Anne, sometimes memories are involved, especially of her childhood on a farm outside Waxahachie, where she loved playing in dirt. There are other kinds of memories, as well: "One of my husband's hybrids is 'Lonestar Helen Mahr,' named after his mother. So, often, when we are working with our violets, we not only enjoy the relaxing process of potting, but we also think of events and special folks in our lives."

VIOLET TALES

Calmness, relaxation, and welcome memories are ideal experiences. Even so, Gesneriad pros do relate darker tales, too. New York hybridizer Dr. Ralph Robinson, Anne recalled, named one of his new hybrids 'Rob's Suicidal Squirrel' recalling a squirrel that ran in front of his car while he was driving to an African violet show.

Mortality can also haunt the plant room. "I've killed many plants, probably hundreds by now," Penny confessed. "With Gesneriads being so easy to propagate, I don't worry or even try to keep every one anymore."

Even so, sometimes Penny's efforts to enhance their lives have complicated her life. "When I was new to African violets and forum participants were raving about how great fish fertilizer was for their plants, I tried it. I let the plants absorb the treated water in large trays, and everything seemed fine that night," Penny recalled. "But when I got home the next day after work, the whole house smelled like rotten fish. I had to remove the plants, drag all the trays outside to be thoroughly washed. What

a mess! This was probably the most embarrassing thing I ever did with my plants."

Anne admitted her own misadventures with Gesneriads, and particularly lamented an incident with one of her husband's African violets. They were living in San Antonio at the time and planned a trip to a state show in Austin, where (for the first time) Richard would competitively enter some of his plants. She remembers that this decision "was a very big deal!"

Richard was especially proud of a profusely blooming 'Pink Energy' African violet, which measured an extraordinary 32 inches across with "incredible symmetry — a perfect circle of leaves — one of the most important criteria counted by the judges of a show." Anne was being careful — she really was — as she "tilted the enormous plant to get it through the doorway to the car, but the plant slipped and was damaged when [she] scrambled to catch it." What once was a symmetrical tropical now was half-moon shaped. "I could not believe what I had done! Needless to say, that rather silent trip to Austin had one plant missing."

VIOLETS & GENDER

Anne's marriage survived and their African violet partnership also remained intact. Actually, there's a little back-story to their joint Gesneriad venture. "Richard had always loved his grandmother's violets," Anne reminisced, and so she wasn't completely surprised when he purchased an African violet ('Ballet Lisa') at a mall show in Austin to give her on their first wedding anniversary. It wasn't long, though, before Richard was caring for their first African violet, and many years later he would even release five hybrids in his 'Lonestar' African violets series.

Clearly, men are fascinated by African violets and will get their hands on them one way or another. Even so, these tropicals are often perceived as girly plants. Half-seriously, I asked Anne if she thought there was a gender gap among African violet growers.

"I think that African violets are often perceived as girly because of their names," Anne admitted. "Violets with names such as 'Red Velvet,' 'Jolly Snow White' or 'Buckeye Love's Caress' suggest

the more feminine qualities of beauty, colors or sentimental feelings." And it is true, she added, "the earliest 'violet' clubs emerged from the predominantly female garden clubs." But that was long ago, Anne pointed out, "and today many of the best growers and hybridizers in the United States are men." Anne rattled off an impressive list of men currently involved in the field, including "an ex-military Texan who rides a Harley-Davidson, raises horses, and creates the teeniest-tiny floral designs with African violets."

Asked and answered. It is evident, too, that being male or female makes no difference in how owning one little African violet will likely lead to the acquisition of other Gesneriads. One of these tropicals is rarely enough and invites further plant and human connections. "You can be involved with growers all over the world," Penny said. "It really is amazing. I've traded leaves with people all over the US and from South Africa."

VIOLET ADDICTION

If growing African violets is much easier than most people tend to imagine, so is getting addicted to them. For Marge, maybe it all started with Mom: "I first became interested in the Queen of Houseplants when my mother brought them into the house. It was after World War II, and people turned to pleasanter pastimes, instead of saving tinfoil for the scrap metal drive and putting your favorite rubber dolly into the 'war effort.' I'm sure my mother grew nearly all the original 10 Armacost & Royston hybrids: 'Blue Boy,' 'Pink Girl,' 'Admiral,' 'Neptune,' and others."

As an adult, Marge occasionally purchased a violet and eventually lost it. One day during retirement, though, she spotted a cart of African violets marked down in an after-Mother's-Day sale. "'Take me home,' they cried! So I did. Then I said to myself, 'Self, you're going to keep these plants alive this time!' So I bought *How to Grow African Violets*, read it, and highlighted passages for ready reference."

That's how Marge's violet addiction began. For Anne, all it took was a stealth gift from her husband, and in Penny's case it was a causal, innocent visit to an Austin African violet show. "I bought a

few plants at this show, eventually collected ten to fifteen plants and got a very small plant stand. But then I had my two boys, got really busy, and managed to keep only one of those original plants. Fifteen years or so later, my sister in Chicago got very interested in African violets and Gesneriads through her local botanical garden and got me interested again. I went to a local club meeting, started getting involved and just got hooked."

VIOLET AFFIRMATION

It is, Penny further indicated, "really easy to propagate African violets. I must have propagated thousands of plants, but it is still really thrilling each time to see those first little green 'mouse ears' peep out from the soil. And waiting for buds to open, especially of a new plant you've never grown before, can drive you crazy sometimes — it seems to take forever. But it is so exciting when the blooms open — they are so gorgeous. I find this 'circle of life' very life-affirming."

For Marge, too, "nothing says hope for the future like putting down a new leaf — propagation by plant tissue. For personal satisfaction, I take out

the tray of leaves to see what has come up while I wasn't looking. Growing anything is good for the soul, but African violets in particular can be 'little healers.'"

To prove her point, Marge mentioned a cancer patient whose plants had been neglected by her absence. "They were leaning, they had developed problems from her not being there, as she sat depressed in the middle of the room." But, even so, she felt her spirits lift "because the neglected plants also were *blooming*." Emotional uplift is also the theme of Marge's story of a mother "lovingly moved to West Texas from her family home." She enjoys "her apartment full of baker's racks, where African violets and other Gesneriads flourish, though she had never grown them before. Her daughter says, 'Mom wakes up in a garden every morning.'"

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Bertha

Exhibited by:
Meredith Hall
Hybridized by:

B. Foster
Large



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

A Family Portrait

By Georgene Albrecht

101 Oak Heights Drive • Oakdale, PA 15071

Email: georgena@verizon.net



Sinningia 'Amizade'

This hairy-leaved *Sinningia* (sin IN jee a) was hybridized by Dave Zaitlen. The flowers on my plant seem to be reverting to a parent, *S. hirsute*. This hybrid is well suited to grow in light gardens. The width is under twelve inches, and it does not seem to need extra heat or light. It is grown under the center of two T-8 tubes. It sprawls if light is insufficient. Keep from watering their foliage. Mine are grown on acrylic mats, which are kept evenly moist, but not soggy. This plant does best outside of a container.



Streptocarpus 'TSF Zhizel'

What a bloom! It is long-lasting and seems to have only one large bud at a time. This plant is listed as a *Streptocarpus* from Russia. Mine came from the convention in Detroit. Because my growing conditions are very humid, my new purchases are always repotted in my lightest soil mix the day after we come home.



Boyce Edens Research Fund

By John Carter, AVSA President

A question was recently asked about what kind of research is currently being done related to African violets. This was a question to determine where the funds donated to the Boyce Edens Research Fund (BERF) really go. This is a fair question and I will try to answer it here for all of our membership.

We have two special committees who look for opportunities for Research and Scholarships, which are funded by BERF. Dr. Jeff Smith, who also authors "In Search of New Violets" in the *African Violet Magazine* each month, monitors activity relating to "Saintpaulia" in the education and scientific communities. He has written several articles in the past few years relating to the DNA testing and reclassification of the species which was done as a result of research in that field.

The nature of research has changed over the years, and it has gotten very expensive. Universities depend upon large grants for most of their research projects. They look for grants that will be repeated year after year. Most of this research is directed at efforts to make things better, less expensive, and longer lasting. This type of information translates to increased income and often profits from providing a better product.

This type of research is being done for the benefit of African violets by the hybridizers of the violets we have available to us. They are doing this research to offer new varieties to us. For some, this does not require thousands of dollars, rather many hours of work and careful cultivation to determine what ones will be the best. Larger greenhouses like the Holtkamp operation will have a staff dedicated to making new and better violets for our benefit. Each and every one of us support our vendor's research when we purchase their violets. There is no need for BERF to fund this type of research.

We do have pests and diseases that affect our violets. Thrips are our biggest problem and the carrier of disease from one plant to another. However, there are many proven safe technologies to control thrips. Chemical companies spend millions of dollars in developing safe and approved chemicals for the control of thrips, mites, and the various fungal problems that can infect our violets. Again, the BERF is not well-enough funded to make any improvement in this area.

One thing that is needed is young people to be educated in the fields related to horticulture. These young people could become the researchers that can identify changes in genetics and chemistry that could make a difference someday. Just as the cost of research has risen, the cost of education has risen and continues to do so. A scholarship of a thousand dollars might be the encouragement a young person needs to continue their education in a field related to horticulture. Dr. Charles Ramser is the chair of the Scholarship Committee that oversees the process of receiving, reviewing and recommending the awarding of a scholarship.

Your donation to the BERF is deposited in an earmarked interest earning fund from which scholarships can be paid. Information for applying for a scholarship is available on the website. If your affiliate also offers a scholarship, as mine does, you can pass on the information about the AVSA scholarship to the person receiving your scholarship who might then qualify for additional monies from AVSA. Applications are reviewed by the AVSA Scholarship Committee, which consists of experienced educators. They make recommendations to the board, which then votes to approve the expense. I hope this has been helpful information, and that you will continue your support of this fund.



It's Time to Send in Your Best Varieties List

By John Carter

Your input is important to making the Best Varieties List meaningful. We need for you to submit your nominations during the next four months. The Best Varieties report will be published in the November/December issue of the African Violet Magazine. For your information to be included in this report submit it by September 1, 2014.

This year you have the option of entering your list from the website. You will need to enter the Members Section and select the Best Varieties

option. You will have an online form to fill out. Enter up to twenty-five different varieties and click the submit button. That is all that it takes. You also have the option of printing a form which can be filled out and snail mailed.

If you simply want to email a list or attachment you can send it to best_varieties@avsa.org. The snail mail address is John Carter, 1825 W Lincoln St, Broken Arrow, OK, 74012-8509. This information is also inside the cover of the magazine.

Show Schedule Approver Meredith Hall

Email: m.hall@reagan.com

254-896-2397

BOYCE EDENS RESEARCH FUND

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Donations received from December 1, 2013 – January 31, 2014 Total = \$ 1,311.00

Chimera



Arnold W. Mueller, Mueller Greenhouse,
Vista, CA

In memory of Arnold W. Mueller

Geneva

Sylvia and Bruce Farnum, Lakeland, MN

In memory of C. Paulette Povey

Garden State African Violet Club, Titusville, NJ

*In memory of Fred Hill, our long
time member and friend.*



Multicolor

Al and Karen Cenci, Milford, OH

In memory of Thelma Miller

Two-tone



AVS of Philadelphia, PA

*In lieu of expenses for the following
judges: Susan Arnao, Paula Bal, Grace
Egan, Linda LoPresti, and Jan Murasko*

Thumbprint



Heather Finke, Beachwood, OH

Annette N. Hershkowitz, Commack, NY

Elizabeth D. Lebert, Clinton, CT

Linda Manning, Tupper Lake, NY

Martha Nix, Ballwin, MO

Closet Violets

By Kathy Brewster

Photo Credit: Jessica Alvarez

The art of growing African violets is expressed in many ways. The techniques vary from country to country. The methods we used during my years in Germany were quite different than those I use now, in Texas. The end results still delight me. I do agree with Pat Hancock when she concluded that the key ingredients are love and care.

In my world of growing African violets, necessity has often proven itself to be the mother of invention. For years, I turned lights on and off every day. When I traveled, I gave specific instructions of when and how to water and provide adequate lighting for my beauties. When the children grew up and left home, I realized I had a problem.

My son's closet provided additional space and proved to be an excellent hideout for the leaves that I was propagating. I finally established a lighting system on timers in my plant room—but what about the leaves in my closet? I decided to shut the lights off and let them sit in the dark until we returned.

After four days, I wondered how the leaves in the closet were surviving. I asked my son to stop by the house to turn the closet lights on until we arrived back home. Upon arrival, the leaves looked pretty good, so I decided this would be the perfect time to experiment with them. I wanted to see what a violet would look like with three to four day light/dark intervals. The most interesting violet came from the leaves of '*Rrav's Scottish Twilight*.' The results are noteworthy I think. As the plant grew, it joined my other violets that I grow in clear plastic crates, each 105 quarts in size



'Rrav's Scottish Twilight'

The challenges of my experiments have been rewarding over the years. The Lord gives me so many wonderful ideas! Now I know that closets are not just for clothes anymore, but heat and sometimes cold, plus the extended light and gross darkness can produce a violet with blue ribbon qualities.

Sports of '*Rrav's Scottish Twilight*'





'Sport of 'Golden Autumn'



'Sport of Guelph's Dynamite'



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

S. 5c1 clone ionantha

Exhibited by: Alcie Maxwell

The Propagation of Fantasies

By Pat Hancock

Of all the beautiful blossoms that grace our modern African violets, "fantasies," have been my favorites for many years. They are also the most unstable, unpredictable, and independent of all African violets. They often seem to have "a mind of their own."

In many ways, they seem similar to chimeras in that they are subject to change from heat and cold, fertilizers, etc., etc. The first bloom on a fantasy seedling is seldom the bloom it will have when more mature. They hardly ever propagate true 100% of the time from leaf to cuttings. The word, "variable," appears more often in their descriptions than in the descriptions of any other color pattern. In spite of all these negatives, they will always be my favorite African violets, and I will keep trying to breed a more beautiful one.

Many years ago, at an AVSA convention, I noticed that two venders were selling the same fantasy African violet. I noticed that ones from one of sellers were more marked and more colorful than were those from the other seller. I asked about it, and learned that the vender with the brighter colors, was growing the plants as if they were chimeras. The other was growing them in the normal way – from leaf cuttings.

The difference in the plants was striking, wondered if it could be that *some* fantasies should be treated as chimeras? Chimeras do not have a complete copy of their genetics in the leaves, only in the blossoms. Perhaps some fantasies show a tendency to behave in the same way.

I believe that many of our modern day chimeras are sports of fantasy-type blossoms. I have seen plants in which half of the blossoms were fantasies, and half were chimeras. Perhaps they are more closely related than we know. Is it possible that some fantasies would be more colorful and beautiful if we treated their propagation the same as chimeras? For example: bloom stems or crown removal?

Several years ago, I hybridized a plant called 'Buckeye Especially Mine.' It was a cross between 'Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler' and 'Buckeye Calico.' It is the only cross I have ever made between

"sister seedlings." Very close breeding is said to magnify whatever genes are present – good or bad!

This cross produced several lovely plants, many of them fantasies: 'Buckeye Eyestopper,' 'Buckeye Easy Goes,' 'Buckeye Extravaganza,' 'Buckeye Evermore Freckles,' 'Buckeye Elderberry Wine,' 'Buckeye Enough Pizazz,' 'Buckeye Electric Dream,' and 'Buckeye Especially Mine.'

My favorite plant from the cross was 'Buckeye Especially Mine,' hence the name. I gave the original seedling to my friend, Anne Thomas, and put down many leaves for testing. When the babies from the second generation bloomed, they were disappointing. Few, if any, were as colorful as the original seedling. They were pretty, but not *as* pretty. Occasionally, a gorgeous one would show up, but not often enough. We tried suckers from Anne's plant, but some of those were not the same. We stopped just short of removing the crown, as we did not want to risk losing the plant. Then, I remembered the plants grown a few years earlier by the two commercial venders, and decided to try bloom stems.

Sure enough, the plants grown from bloom stems were much more colorful, and amazingly like the original! About this time, Anne showed the original plant at the Minneapolis Convention. I don't remember what it won, but it was quite a hit, and several people asked for leaves.

Afterwards, I wished that I had advised them to try a bloom stem instead. Bloom stems do not make as many plantlets as leaves – usually only one or two. However, the color will be the same on the resulting plant as it was on the bloom. If you are having a problem with fantasies sporting to solid or less colorful from leaf cuttings; I suggest trying propagation with bloom stems.

The method I am now using is with a product called "clonex." It is a root promoting gel that can be used to start suckers, crowns, and bloom stems. It can be purchased from hydroponic stores.

Cut the bloom stem about 1" below the bracts. Carefully remove the bloom and buds. DO NOT

remove the bracts. Dip the end in Clonex – just the tip. Plant in a Solo cup with holes in the bottom. I plant in 1/2 African violet soil and 1/2 vermiculite, that is moist, but not dripping wet. Cover

with a sandwich bag and place under the lights. Plantlets may be repotted when they have six leaves.



The African Violet Society Helped Me Become a Better Grower

By Pam Jorgenson

I have loved African violets for over forty years. Living in the upper peninsula of Michigan, availability of plants and supplies was pretty limited. Internet access via satellite is just opening up in this area.

About two years ago I was at our local library, and through an inter-library loan, was

able to get the book, *You CAN Grow African Violets*, by Kent and Joyce Stork.

After reading the book, I decided to join AVSA, and I am so glad that I did! I then started to receive the *African Violet Magazine*...wow! All of these years I have just been 'coasting' with my African violets. They lived, but didn't thrive; they bloomed, but not like they should. I think it was time, after 40 years, that I learned to grow them properly; and learn, I did!

I learned about wick watering, soil mixes and amendments in the correct ratios for use with wick-watering. I also learned about fluorescent lighting. Author, Neil Lipson, taught me which lamps to use in combination to get the best results; distance from plants, to lights, and length of time under the lights.

By reading the AVM, I also learned about

fertilizers, pots, transplanting, propagating, and where to purchase plants, supplies, and light stands.

You should see my plants now! They are thriving, and in bloom almost constantly!

I must say, "Thank you AVSA!"

When I have called the office, you have always been so helpful and have bent over backwards to find me the information I have needed.

Thank you, also, to the suppliers I have dealt with; Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses for the wonderful plants and John Cook at Cape Cod Violetry, who carries just about everything you would need. He is so knowledgeable, helpful, and his service can't be beat.

Also, I want to thank all of you people who write articles for the AVM. I learn, and I know others do, too, from everyone of you!

I guess you can tell that I am glad I joined AVSA! My next goal is to find an African violet club to join. What a wonderful hobby, and wonderful people! Together, you all make it work!



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Cajun's Pink Crepe Paper

Best African Violet on Display Table - Commercial

Exhibited by: B.J. Ohme

Hybridized by: B. Thibodeaux

Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Dust Storm

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis

Hybridized by: R. Robinson

Semiminiature

For Beginners

By Mary S. Schaeffer

Email: mary@maryschaeffer.com
Blog: maryschaeffer.tumblr.com • Twitter: [@Africanviolets](https://twitter.com/Africanviolets)

Groom, Groom, Groom

When most people think of taking care of their violet collection, they think about watering, repotting, fertilizing and perhaps getting their plants ready for a show. For many people, grooming is something that only comes into serious consideration when they are getting plants ready for a show. This is unfortunate because regular grooming can make the difference between a blue ribbon winner and a plant that stays at home.

Regular Grooming

Most growers will remove dead or fading flowers on a regular basis. This is something that should be done as soon as the flowers fade. The stalks of dead flowers are magnets for bugs. So, as much as possible, keep that door shut. While it sounds easy enough, it's something you do need to stay on top of. Of course, the more serious grower concerned primarily about their annual shows keep their violets disbudded year round and don't have this problem. But, for those of us who like to enjoy their violets year round, step one in a best practice violet growing regime should be the very regular removal of dead flowers.

Likewise—especially if you are growing plants from leaves—look for small immature leaves and remove them. This is very important when the plants are young. The small leaves have to be removed at some point if you want a strong healthy plant, so remove them as soon as you can. These leaves are easy to identify. They are typically the ones on the bottom that are smaller than those on the next row of leaves.

Also, on a regular basis, remove yellowing



leaves. Again, these tend to be in the bottom-most circle. They don't add to the strength of the plant, but rather detract from it. Also, they are unsightly. Remove them early on and all-in-all, your plants will be stronger. The plant's energy can go into supporting healthy leaves and producing new ones.

Lastly, be on the lookout for suckers.

Suckers are those alternate heads that if left alone soon produce another crown. They can be rooted to produce another plant. However, they sap energy from the mother plant and until separated, both heads will produce fewer flowers.

The trick with suckers is to distinguish them from bloom stalks. When they are quite small, that can take a little detective work. Look closely at the emerging growth. If it has two leaves, it is likely to be the bloom stalk. If it has three, it will be a sucker. Carefully remove the sucker, for if you are not careful, you might damage the mother plant. The smaller the sucker, the easier it is to remove. You can use a pencil, small knife, your finger nails, or my favorite, a tool called a sucker plucker. Of course, if you are regularly disbudding a violet in preparation for a show, it won't matter if it's a sucker or a bloom stalk, you'll remove it.

Every week or two, look at your plants. I'm not talking about going into your plant space and kind of gazing over the lot of them. Rather, pick up each violet and look at it closely for spent flowers, small leaves, yellowed leaves, and suckers. Remove all of them.

Washing Your Plants

While we don't really grow violets for their

foliage, the leaves on a well-grown violet can be quite beautiful. That doesn't happen without some effort. Think about your home. No matter how good a housekeeper you are, eventually dust gets in. And, dust doesn't discriminate. It lands equally on all surfaces, and that includes the space where your violets live. Left unchecked, that dust will block the pores of the foliage and leave the plant with an overall dull appearance.

Removing that grime is relatively easy. Wash your plants – but don't use Pledge or some other cleanser meant for dusting. By the way, washing is much easier if you do it when the plant is not in bloom – but you probably figured that out.

Take the plant to your sink and give it a good spritzing. If your sink has a sprayer attachment, you can use that. If not, you can buy a plastic bottle for this purpose relatively inexpensively. Don't gently mist the plant but do be gentle. The water used should be room temperature or warmer, but not of course, scalding hot. Give each plant a nice gentle shower making sure you thoroughly cover every leaf.

Since you've already got the plant at the sink, this might be a good time to leach your plant as well. This involves taking a cup of clear plain water and pouring it through your violet to help rid it of any fertilizer salts that may have built up in the pot. This is especially important if you bottom water.

Don't let the plant stand in the water that drains off the plant, for violets don't like wet feet. You might check the crown of the violet to

make sure no water has settled in there. If some has either tilt the plant so it pours out or gently dab it up with a tissue or paper towel.

If you are growing in natural light, make sure the leaves are dry before returning the plant to a sunny position. If the sun has passed for the day, you can return it when you want for the leaves will be dry by the time the sun comes through the next day. If you need to return the plant to a sunny window, pat the leaves dry.

If you are growing under lights, you can return the plants whenever you want. The water on the leaves is unlikely to cause any damage.

Concluding Thoughts

If you were lucky enough to go to the convention in Cherry Hill in 2011, you probably saw some of Sandy Skalski's beautiful violets. She won many ribbons and prizes, including Best-in-Show. Our local club was fortunate enough to have her come speak at one of our meetings. She talked about how she grows her violets.

She grooms on a very regular basis, working closely with her plants every Thursday evening. Does that mean she misses *Scandal* and *Grey's Anatomy* on TV? But, I'm digressing. Anyway, her advice was to "pick, pick, pick." And, this applies in spades if you are growing trailers. But, trailers are a topic for another column. Spend a little time grooming each of your plants on a regular basis and they'll repay you by blooming their heads off – and isn't that why we grow them?

"Quick Fix" For a Neck

By Chris Mason

If you don't have time to actually remove the plant from the pot, cut the stem or neck, and totally repot, and if the neck is no more than an inch long, try the following:

First, scrape the neck to expose fleshy tissue, either with a knife or your thumb nail. Loosen the existing soil by squeezing the pot. Hold the neck with 2 fingers from each hand and gently push the violet down deeper into the pot. If you have

loosened the soil enough, the plant should go that 1" deeper into the pot. Voila, no more neck!

Remember, this is a "temporary fix." Any time you have a neck, it probably means the plant has been in the same soil/pot for at least a year and is due to be repotted with a clean pot and fresh soil.

From *Ye Bay Stater*, Publication of the Bay State AVS

The Beauty and Mystery of 'Concord'

by Neil Lipson



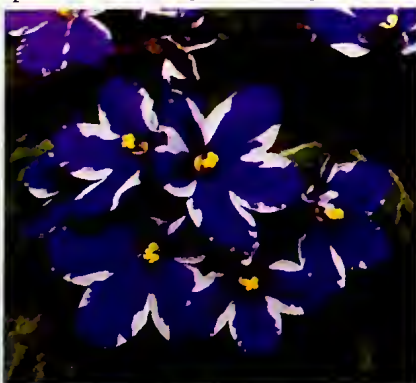
'Concord' with the 50/50 stripe

If I had to choose one favorite plant in my entire collection of violets, I probably would choose the chimera, 'Concord.' It has the most striking high contrast of any blossom I have ever seen. It does, have to be grown with certain restrictions, but will reward you with incredible beauty. Chimeras originate as "sports" of other plants.

Kazuo Horikoshi, in Tokyo, Japan, introduced 'Concord' to the African violet world. I was given a sucker of 'Concord' in the early '90s and have grown it from then on.

I started photographing 'Concord' from the very beginning, and noticed that recorded in these photos over many years the white stripe became thinner and thinner. What was happening? A lot. I decided to research what could be done to revive the old 'Concord' I knew in the beginning, and what other steps could be taken to keep it from slowly reverting. What I wanted was the pinwheel bloom, but with equal-sized stripes of both the white and the purple.

In 2011 I had a beautiful 'Concord' blooming just



2008 'Concord'

in time for the 2011 AVSA Cherry Hill convention. However, the foliage was not the best, and I wasn't sure I should enter it into the show. My friend, Marian Meschkow, encouraged me to enter it anyway. After the ribbons were awarded at the show, I got the shock of my life. It was the only 'Concord' entered in the show, and it won the blue ribbon and Best in Class. Sitting next to the plant was an award card for \$100 from Kazuo Horikoshi, who developed the plant. From then on, I knew I had a special plant.

Why did the stripe change over the years? Well, when I posted the photos on the Internet, a few people had some solid information of what was happening. Chris Nagy told me that the stripe was temperature sensitive, and he was right, the lower the temperature, the wider the white stripe.

In my temperature regulation article in 2013, I wrote the following when I posted the question "Do different temperatures affect chimeras?" on an Internet site, and I got this response from Dr. Rachel Martin, associate Professor at UC Irvine:

"That seems likely to me. Because a chimera has two genetically different types of cells growing together, if one is more heat-sensitive than the other, the growth of that cell type could be suppressed by the high temperatures."

Her comment made perfect sense to me and explained quite a bit. It was not based on research, mind you, but her intuitive knowledge



2011 'Concord'

about violets indicated that this could very well be the case.

I didn't want to have to play with the temperature to get the plant to bloom

correctly, so I scoured the Internet to find a 'Concord' that was truer to the original, and I found it. Don Landek, a research scientist, was selling the plant on eBay under the eBay name GAME-TOPHYTE. I immediately ordered one, and so did my friend Jeannie Myers, and sure enough, it bloomed true for both of us. I immediately pulled out the center, called "crowning" the plant, and it produced suckers like crazy. I am now cultivating these suckers and making backups so that I don't worry in the future.

Chimeras can revert at the drop of a hat, so if you have spares, you really need to give them to friends for backup. I make it a point to give special friends suckers of any chimeras I have, as I have had to go back to them to get the plant again when mine reverted, which happens often.

Some chimeras revert slowly and others, much faster. Temperature extremes can cause a chimera to suddenly revert and never come back. This is why I go to so much trouble to keep the temperatures in the growing room as stable as possible. However, over time, my earlier 'Concords' very slowly reverted, and I coined this process "chimera drift."

All five of my 'Sugar N' Spice' chimeras reverted in one warm week in July, and they never returned to normal. I was lucky enough to have given it to a friend, as this chimera was nowhere to be found. I then got it back in circulation, and now the plant is thriving again.

One of the problems with my old 'Concord' was not only that the stripe changed, but also, the foliage lost its vigor. The blooms were pretty, but the leaves were blotchy. The new plant I got from Don Landek is fine in all respects.

One of the interesting points about the way Don

propagates chimeras is that he uses tissue culture on a blossom stalk, which I had never heard of in the past. However, it was widely



known that 'Concord' from D. Landek tissue culture was not a dependable way to "clone" chimeras. This must mean that Don has come up with a way to get the entire genetic material from the plant in the method that he has developed. That in itself is fascinating, and probably is the basis of another article in the future. Don explained to me how he does this, and it is a whole new area in chimera reproduction. Tissue culture is not for the faint of heart, and you really need an autoclave and sterile conditions to accomplish this.

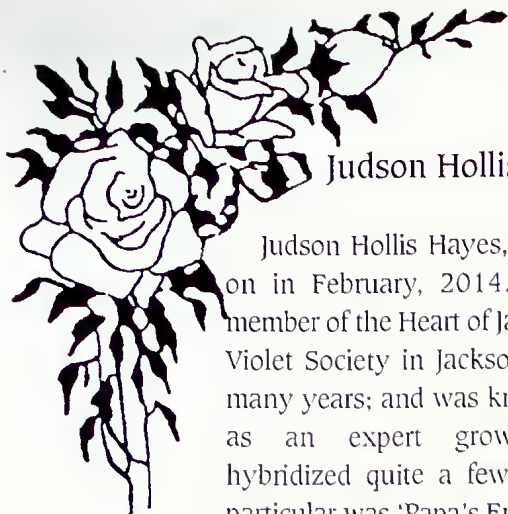
I love this plant, although chimeras in general are unstable. I do think that they are worth the trouble, and about half of my collection is comprised of chimeras I have grown over the years.

I would like to thank Jeannie Myers, Chris Nagy, and Don Landek for their help in writing this article.

Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant. He can be reached by emailing him at ndlipson@gmail.com or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. He will return your call.



Painting by: Barbara Philip



In Memory

Judson Hollis Hayes

Mildred "Mickey" Eberle

Judson Hollis Hayes, 88, passed away on in February, 2014. He had been a member of the Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society in Jacksonville, Florida for many years; and was known and admired as an expert grower. He also hybridized quite a few violets. One in particular was 'Papa's Ena,' which he gave to many of our members, who are still growing them and some of his other hybrids in our collections. Jud was a Veteran of World War II and was U. S. Navy retired. We miss him.

Mickey Eberly passed away in January, 2014. She served the Milwaukee AVS as President and Treasurer, and served as Treasurer of the Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs. Mickey grew award-winning African violets, and was an AVSA Judge. During World War II, she was a drill press operator, and throughout her life enjoyed many pursuits, as a figure skater, tennis player, volleyball champion, world traveler, dancer, and as a grandmother of 11 and great-grandmother of five. She was loved by all who knew her.

What About Pasteurizing the Mix?

From YOU CAN Grow African Violets

By Kent & Joyce Stork

Commonly, violet growers recommend pasteurizing potting mix to destroy pathogens and some of the dangerous bacteria, fungi, and pests in the soil. We do not do this in our collection and generally don't encourage others to do it. Before we explain why, let's examine what pasteurizing is.

Pasteurization is a process of raising the soil temperature to 1800 F and holding it at that temperature for thirty minutes. It is not sterilization, since the purpose is not to eliminate all bacteria, but only those that cause disease.

If one were adding some organic soil (garden loam) to the mix, then pasteurization is a wise course. Organic soil may contain pathogens, nematodes, and microorganisms that can wreak havoc in a violet collection. Pasteurize this one ingredient only.

When growers use inorganic potting mix with sterile ingredients such as sphagnum peat,

vermiculite, and perlite, pasteurization is not needed unless the mix has been contaminated by diseased plant tissue, insects, or fungus. In fact, studies have found that pasteurizing sphagnum peat moss actually reduced its ability to resist the presence of pythium root rot disease.

When using the recommend one-one-one formula for potting mix, pasteurizing is generally not required. However, if organic soil is added, it probably does become necessary.



Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Belinda Thibodeaux – Patterson, LA

'Cajun's Alfie' (10631) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble coral pansy. **Crown variegated** medium green, cream, pink, and yellow, quilted. **Semiminiature**

'Cajun's Code Blue' (10632) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble dark blue pansy. **Variegated** medium green, white and pink, plain, heart-shaped, quilted. **Standard**

'Cajun's Coujon' (10633) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single pink two-tone pansy/dark raspberry sparkle edge. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, quilted. **Large**

'Cajun's Deja Vu' (10634) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble chimera bright pink pansy/purple stripe. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, quilted. **Standard**

'Cajun's Delicate Touch' (10635) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble-double pink frilled star/thin raspberry sparkle edge. **Variegated** medium green and cream, heart-shaped, quilted. **Large**

'Cajun's Fair Maiden' (10636) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble-double pink frilled pansy/darker eye, variable thin raspberry sparkle edge. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, plain, heart-shaped, quilted. **Standard**

'Cajun's Hill Be Blue' (10637) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble dark blue frilled star. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain, quilted. **Large**

'Cajun's Le Bon Ton Roulé' (10638) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble pink star/heavy blue fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain/red back. **Semiminiature**



'Cajun's Lil Joy' (10639) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble pink pansy/darker mottling. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain/red back. **Semiminiature**

'Cajun's Lil Love' (10640) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble pink pansy/purple fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain/red back. **Semiminiature**

'Cajun's Lil Ooh La La' (10641) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble two-tone pink pansy/blue fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain/red back. **Semiminiature**

'Cajun's Lil Sprinkles' (10642) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble pink two-tone star/purple fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain/red back. **Semiminiature**

'Cajun's Lil Tizzy' (10643) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble pink pansy/purple fantasy. **Variegated** medium green, cream and pink, plain, serrated/red back. **Semiminiature**

'Cajun's Pink Crepe Paper' (10644) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Semidouble-double pink star/variable raspberry mottling. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, plain, heart-shaped. **Standard**

'Cajun's Roses Anyone' (10645) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Double pink two-tone star. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, heart-shaped. **Standard**

'Cajun's Slow Dance' (10646) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Single-semidouble pink two-tone star/raspberry sparkle edge. **Variegated** medium green and white. **Standard**

'Cajun's Storm Watch' (10647) 12/07/2013 (B. Thibodeaux) Double dark blue frilled star/pink and white fantasy. **Variegated** dark green, cream and pink, heart-shaped, quilted, serrated/red back. **Standard**



From Russian with Love: African Violet Exhibitions in Moscow

By Dmitry Ozherelyev
<ozherelev@eurogym.ru>

The history of violet exhibitions began a long time ago. Before, such exhibitions were held in Moscow Biological Museum, but now they are organized in "House of Violet," a small and very cozy shop in the center of Moscow that was founded by Vladimir Kalgin and became, for violet admirers, a real home.



LE-Hozyaika Mednoi Gory
(LE-The Mistress of the Copper Mountain)

Exhibited by: Margarita Nesterova

Hybridized by: E. Lebedskaia
Standard

Photo Credit: Dmitry Ozherelyev

In this brief article I would like to share with our overseas friends, who are fond of African Violets, information about the exhibitions that take place in Moscow, the capital of Russia.



AE-Avantura

Exhibited by: Elena Morozova

Hybridized by: E. Arkhipov
Standard

Photo Credit: Elena Morozova



N-Vera (N-Faith)

Exhibited by: Elena Morozova

Hybridized by: N. Berdnikova
Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Elena Morozova

The growing interest to this particular flower is reflected in the frequency of such events. Before, exhibitions took place two or three times a year, whereas now, thirteen times, particularly every month. It is astonishing that the house is always full, and not only due to the keen interest of violet fanciers, but also ardent love of those who are fond of house plants.

The format of Moscow displays is a little bit different from the one you get used to, because it is in fact a trade exhibition. You cannot only enjoy the huge amount (no less than 200 plants at one

time) of blooming flowers, but you may also purchase them, to add to your collection, either by a leaf, or even a small plant of the variety you like.

Stork, Olive and Ralph Robinson, Martin Holtkamp, David Senk, and others.



N-Avatar

Exhibited by: Margarita Nesterova

Hybridized by: N. Berdnikova

Miniature

Photo Credit: Margarita Nesterova

These exhibitions are an opportunity to see the new varieties produced by our Russian and Ukrainian hybridizers: **Natalya Puminova**, **Elena Lebetskaia**, **Svetlana Repkina**, **Olga Aksenkina**, **Galina Lazorenko**, and our new, but very promising hybridizers from Kursk: **Tatyana Pugacheva** and **Natalya Skornyakova**. Certainly, none of these events can do without the well-known and beloved violets of American selection, trendsetters in the violet world, different sorts by **Paul Sorano**, **Kent**



N-Adam

Exhibited by: Margarita Nesterova

Hybridized by: N. Berdnikova

Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Margarita Nesterova

Of course, before the show opens, the judges assess the plants in each category. However, the major purpose of such exhibitions is to make African violets more popular among the Moscow dwellers and their guests.

Besides the flower display, there are also a lot of different social interactions; seminars, lectures, and meetings with hybridizers. I hope you enjoy these photos, plants of a few outstanding Russian and Ukrainian varieties.



Markiza (Marquise)

Exhibited by: Margarita Tyurina

Hybridized by: T. Dadoyan

Standard

Photo Credit: Dmitry Ozherelyev



RM-Vesna (RM-Spring)

Exhibited by: Vera Khokhlova

Hybridized by: N. Skornyakova

Standard

Photo Credit: Dmitry Ozherelyev

My Views On Fertilizer

by Renee Trenholm

Back in the 70's, when I first began growing African violets, virtually everyone I came across used Peter's 15-30-15 fertilizer at 1/4 teaspoon per gallon (the manufacturers suggested strength was 1 teaspoon per gallon). Consequently, I used that fertilizer religiously. It worked beautifully, too. At that time, my husband and I were quite active in African violet shows, and we received many ribbons and awards for our plants. I never alternated fertilizers or changed brands. The formulation may have been a little different then, because we always wick-watered our African violets, but they did not readily get the crusty buildup on the edges of the pots even though we failed to leach as often as was recommended.

We had stopped raising African violets in the mid-80's and started back two years ago. I had to think back and jog my memory as to how to care for them. Once again, I started using Peters 15-30-15 fertilizer, which proves that old habits die hard! Some time later, I joined the Gesneriphiles e-mail list and read all the fertilizer recommendations posted there. There has been some controversy about the various fertilizers, their formulations, and especially the question of urea nitrogen. Being older and somewhat wiser, it finally dawned on me that just because we used a certain fertilizer twenty-five years ago, that wasn't necessarily the best one for us to use now.

While researching the various brands of fertilizer and trying to avoid urea nitrogen, I came across Optimara 14-12-14 fertilizer. Having had 15-30-15 embedded in my brain, I had never even thought of trying a different formulation. The 14-12-14 sounded like the perfect solution

for my plants because it works on the premise of giving the plants time to develop healthy leaves and roots before they have to put their energy into blooming. We don't show our plants any more (too old and lazy, I guess), so there was nothing to lose by trying the Optimara 14-12-14 fertilizer.

About five months ago, I ordered a one-pound container and began using it on all our African violets as well as all our other gesneriads. The manufacturer's recommendation is one half teaspoon per gallon, but I use one fourth teaspoon per gallon instead because I prefer to err on the side of too little, rather than too much. It is used for all stages of growth from rooting leaves to mature plants. I feel more comfortable with this fertilizer because I don't feel like I'm trying to rush my plants into bloom at the expense of healthy foliage. The mature plants are all blooming quite well, and I am pleased with the results I get with the 14-12-14 formulation.

If you want to test the merits of other fertilizers on your plants, I suggest that you set aside a few test plants to try the different fertilizers so you'll only lose a few plants if the experiment doesn't work out as you had hoped. Ideally, use different fertilizers on the same hybrids and see which fertilizer gives you the desired results. I hope this spurs your curiosity about fertilizers and that you won't wait twenty-five years, as I did, to try something new.

From *The Dixie News Publication* of the
Dixie AVS



How I Got Involved With African Violets

by Gail Sokolowski

I believe my first introduction to the word "violet" was seeing it in a Hallmark Date Book in the '60s, those little books that card and gift shops gave away free each year. They were always found right by the cash registers, and they named a gemstone and flower for each month. February, my birth month, had a gemstone called Amethyst and a flower called violet. Both were the wonderful, regal purple color I loved, and I promptly became infatuated with both the gem and the plant. The only violets I had ever seen grew in our yard (violets, I now think they are rightly called) and the lovely, furry-leaved plants in the grocery store. I saved enough money to purchase the furry kind (with purple flowers of course) from the local A & P and shortly thereafter killed it by kindness - too much water I now know! I was devastated enough to vow to never buy one again. I did manage to get and not lose an amethyst ring. I was probably about ten at the time.

Taunting me, the plants started showing up from the florist for special occasions, not to me, still being too young, but to sickly grandmotherly types. Once again, I was fascinated but fearful. Having asked many a question about them the overwhelming impression was that they were "tricky" to grow. I felt a little better about the killing.

Flash forward to me in my thirties picking up a AAA book about New England. Picture me flipping through it with my amethyst ring on my finger and

my eye catching sight of a place in Connecticut called Buell's that advertised about six greenhouses full of, you guessed it, African violets. I felt the powers that be were showing me a sign that violets belonged in my life again. Well, it didn't take too long to talk a friend into a road trip, with each of us leaving Buell's with about twelve plants.

That was the second mistake I learned from: it is better for me to have fewer plants than have too many, and have them become less manageable. A few died, but with a Sunset book I bought for reference (I still have it), I seemed to have found the magic ingredients - the right window for light, watering from the bottom with warm water, and the right plant food. I'm still not sure what I liked better - the flowers or the furry leaves.

Flash forward again: to me being definitely no longer in my thirties, forties, and just barely in my fifties now wearing a different amethyst ring AND an amethyst pendant. Then it appeared, an ad for the African violet show at Tower Hill. Time to replace my last victims. I went, fell in love once more, overbought, and managed not to kill most of them. Armed with the *Growing to Show* book, I also decided to join the local club, Gateway. I have met some wonderful people, who unlike me, grow African violets with stunning success, but who also at times manage to kill one or two. They have taught me not to be afraid to try. Sometimes my plants are in bloom, but much of the time they are not. Good thing I still like the furry leaves.

Did You Know?

Some African violets tend to sucker more than others. The reason usually is that the plant is under stress and it's sending out suckers for survival. The stress might be caused from inconsistent watering or fertilizing, conditions that are too cold or hot, or an attack by insects.

Before the suckers get too big, you should remove them. Use the end of a pencil or anything like that which you may have on hand. Leaving

suckers on will result in a plant that won't grow properly and will eventually look like a head of lettuce. Sometimes you might be able to pot up a complete sucker (meaning you can see a center crown) into a small pot. Enclose the whole thing in a baggie. Then roots will develop, and you will have a new plant.

From *Ye Bay Stater* Publication of the Bay State AVS

Technically Speaking...or Not

By Neil Lipson

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Rainwater Collection and Treatment for African Violets

Filtering and Collection of Rainwater "on the cheap"

A year ago, Pat Hancock told me about using rainwater for African violets. That's all I needed to hear. I had a full trashcan of rainwater sitting outside, after the last storm, so I decided to fill empty water jugs with it. My show was only two months away. I was shocked at the results! I got twice as many blue ribbons than the previous show, and from then on, I was hooked. Here's what I did to make the collection and filtering of rainwater as easy as possible.



I filter the water using a few easy techniques to accomplish this task. You can buy a large strainer at a dollar store and cover it with a paint filter mesh that is also available at Home Depot™ for about \$1. If you want to strain even finer particles from the water, you can place a coffee filter in the strainer, and pour the water from one bucket to another. These filters are available at the discount stores in quantities.

First, you do have to live in an area that gets enough rain. If you live in New Mexico, for example, you'll have a tough time getting this to work. However, living near Philadelphia, PA, we get a fair amount of rain. I originally used trashcans to catch the rain, but you can also tap off of your gutters, or place the containers right under a roof overhang. All I did was put some trashcans, buckets, and Rubbermaid Roughneck™ containers under a small area of roof. That did the trick.

(Before you attempt this, you have to find out how old your roof is, and if there are any minerals imbedded in it for algae prevention. Most growers who might use this method will avoid doing so if the roof is less than two years old.)

I keep most containers inside or, if they're outside, I keep them covered to prevent insects and foreign material from getting into the water. Then when full, I either bring in the buckets or, to keep the lifting to a manageable weight, I fill the buckets from the larger tubs or trash cans. A very convenient five-gallon bucket that can be used is bright orange and made by Home Depot™ and cost about \$2 each. They can be carried indoors, either full or partially full, depending on how much you want to lift.

Once I have the Home Depot™ buckets indoors,



To make the job easier, I let the water settle, and most of the particulate matter sinks to the bottom of the bucket. Then, I gently push the one-gallon jug sideways into the Home Depot bucket, where it fits perfectly on its side. I let it fill slowly, and it takes the water from the top, which is the cleanest. Finally, I dump the few inches of water remaining in the bucket outside with this foreign material in it.

The orange Home Depot™ bucket holds five gallons, so a few of them will be sufficient for even the largest collections. An interesting point about this bucket is that it can also be fitted with a Home Depot™ vacuum, which can make it one of the most versatile "appliances" in your home. Being virtually indestructible with reinforced ridges at the top, it is an amazing bargain for the \$2 you're spending.

The one-gallon jugs are those in which you buy various types of water, tea, lemonade, or other drinks. When they are emptied, give the jug a

quick rinse, and you're ready to use it for all of your rainwater.



If you don't mind spending more money, you can get a rain barrel to attach to one of your gutters. The cost of the rain barrel is about \$100 and eliminates any buckets or other containers. It can store as much as fifty gallons of rainwater. You install an elbow fitting on

the input of the barrel, with either a valve or a runoff setup so when the barrel is full, the excess water automatically runs back down the rest of the gutter. Many of these barrels have a brass spigot, so you basically have unlimited water available all the time. You want to check with the manufacturer to make sure that when water freezes in the barrel, it won't cause damage, as water expands when



frozen. You'll notice in the photo how the rain barrel is elevated to allow you to place the jug beneath it.

If you want to split the water flow from either the downspout or to the barrel, Rutland Gutter Supply™ makes a diverter, which can be found at <http://www.rutlandguttersupply.com>. The diverter has a lever that you can flip one way or the other to direct the flow. During the winter, I have actually shoveled snow into the buckets, packed it down, and then brought the buckets into the house to thaw. If you have enough full jugs from



summer and fall, this may not be necessary, but snow is an option.

I tested the rainwater for both pH and for total dissolved solids. The pH was about 7.0, and the total dissolved solids were almost zero, which are the same readings as distilled water. Unless you live in a very polluted area, you should find similar results.

When I mix the water with my fertilizer, I add a few drops of vegetable dye for the appropriate mix I am making. My color code is green for regular fertilizer, blue for a blooming fertilizer, and red for any of my experimental solutions such as hormones or similar additives. That way, I don't use the wrong water on the wrong plants. I use the "pure" rainwater, with no additives at all, for my carnivorous plants, which will die with any kind of fertilizer. In fact, Sundews will not grow properly with more than 20ppm of total dissolved solids, which gives you an idea of how fussy they can be. The color coding eliminates having to mark the bottles, and you instantly acclimate to the right color solution for the particular plant.

Rainwater is a wonderful resource and, of course, you're at the mercy of the amount of rainfall. However, it beats buying distilled water and is one less variable in growing your plants. There are many ways of improving the watering of your plants, but treating tap water can be expensive when you have a large quantity of plants. Also, tap water will vary over time, depending on the quality control of the water treatment facilities. A hidden bonus to rain water is that it doesn't leave spots on the leaves, as there are no dissolved solids in it.

I would like to thank Sue Mandeville for the info on the gutter diverter, Jeannie Myers for her gift with technical editing, and Carolee Carter for the photo of her rain barrel operation.

Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant. He can be reached by emailing him at ndlipson@gmail.com or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. He will return your call.

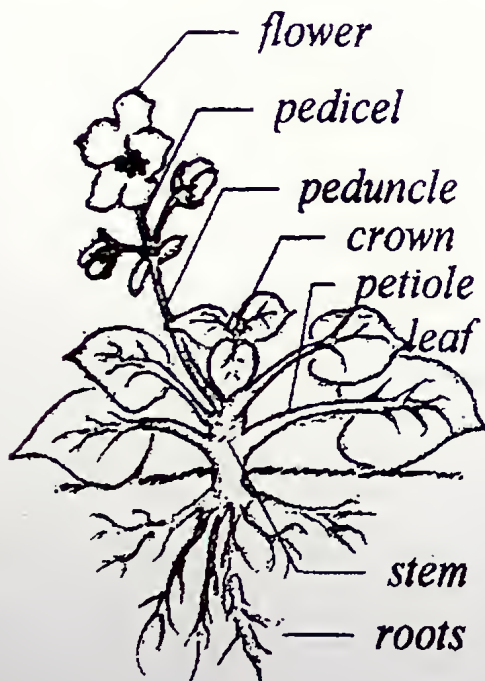
HOW DOES MY AFRICAN VIOLET GROW?

Rena Douglas

The more one studies the "hows" and "whys" of plant function and growth, the more fascinating the whole subject becomes. However, it is difficult to give a description of the most important processes without it becoming either too simplistic or too complicated. Where to start can be a problem, but the beginning isn't a bad choice!

Plants and all other living things are made up of microscopic building blocks called **CELLS** and all the plant's vital chemical processes take place inside its cells. In most animals and plants, groups of cells work together to form **TISSUES** such as the **skin or epidermis**. Different types of tissue then work together to form **ORGANS** such as **leaves, roots and stems** - or heart, lungs etc. in animals.

Most plants have **roots, stem, leaves and flowers**:

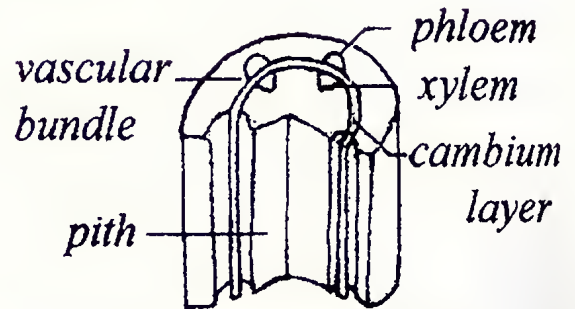


Plant parts

ROOTS - anchor the plant firmly and absorb water and minerals from the soil.

STEM - supports the plant and holds its leaves up to the sunlight. It also carries the plant's plumbing and life-support systems (a bit like our veins and arteries), which are long bundles of tiny tubes carrying water and food around the plant. This plumbing system of **vascular bundles** goes from the roots of the plant to the tips of its leaves and shoots.

The "up" line carries water and minerals from the roots and is called **xylem**, while the "down" line of vascular bundles carrying food from the leaves to the rest of the plant is called **phloem**.



Cross section of stem

LEAVES - are the food factory of the plant.

FLOWERS - hold the reproductive organs - and make the plant look pretty!

Plants differ from animals in two important ways: - 1. They keep on growing throughout their lives.

2. Green plants are the only living things that can make their own food. This is vital for us because they start every food

chain and produce the oxygen in the air we breathe, which means that without green plants we could not survive.

The **three major processes** by which plants live and grow are:

1. PHOTOSYNTHESIS.

This is the chemical process by which greenplants make their own food. It takes place in microscopic structures called **chloroplasts**, which are found in the cells of the leaves. The chloroplasts contain a green pigment called **chlorophyll**. The chlorophyll uses energy from sunlight to combine carbon dioxide from the air with water drawn up by the plant's roots to produce sugars and oxygen.

Once the leaves have converted the water and carbon dioxide to sugars and given off most of the oxygen through the pores or **stomata** found mostly on the underside of the leaves, the sugar solution is transported throughout the plant by the **phloem**.

2. RESPIRATION.

Plants, like us, need oxygen to release energy from their food and the process which does this is called **respiration**. The energy is used for growth, maintenance and repair of the plant tissue and goes on day and night. It is most active at night when? the plant cannot **photosynthesize** and is effectively the

reverse of photosynthesis, since it uses oxygen and gives out carbon dioxide.

3. TRANSPIRATION.

This is the process by which water evaporates from leaves into the air through the **stomata**.

As water vapor is lost through the stomata, more water is travelling up through the plant to replace it. This constant movement of water through the **xylem** from the roots to the air via the stems and leaves is called the **transpiration stream**. The faster the water evaporates, the faster it moves, but if insufficient water is available to the roots, the stomata close and the whole process of photosynthesis and respiration slows down. The plant stops actively growing and if completely deprived of water will wilt and finally die!

All these things are happening continuously while our plants appear just to be sitting on the shelf! Makes you think, doesn't it? Hopefully you will now have a better idea of what is going on and how eager your African violets are to do their best if you will just give them a good amount of light, water, air, warmth and mineral salts (which are needed to complement the other processes). Don't overdo it – moderation and lots of TLC are the order of the day.

From the Newsletter of the Early Morn AV Group, Inc. (Australia)

Mark Your Calendar!

African Violet Society of America's
69th Annual Convention

May 24 - 31, 2015

Kansas City, Missouri

How I Grew a Winning Episcia

Patricia Berilla

I had occasionally grown some fairly nice episcias, but most of the time they were a disappointment; nothing like the beautiful *Episcia* 'Karlyn' Donna Turner had in the 2012 AVSA show in Detroit. When she passed out cuttings from it, I was fortunate to be standing nearby and was able to obtain one. The large and sturdy leaves were very attractive, displaying a deep green color with lime veining.

After arriving home, it was placed in a mixture of perlite and vermiculite with a little Promix added, and placed in a plastic bag for a few weeks until it rooted. As it grew, it was potted into a 3-inch pot, with a soil mixture of Promix, perlite, and vermiculite, 1:1:1. After a few months, it produced three sturdy stolons, which were planted in the same way.

The goal in mind was to have it grow out to have minimal stolons and flowers so that the plant's energy would go into producing large leaves. For the soil, I decided to try something

new to me, a product called 'Happy Frog.' It was highly recommended by Mark Occhinero, owner of Top Garden Products, and a member of our local North Coast Gesneriad Club. This is an organic mixture of sphagnum moss with Mycorrhizae, humic acid, and other interesting ingredients such as earthworm castings and bat guano — sounds awful, but it's light and fluffy with no unpleasant odor. This was mixed with equal amounts of vermiculite and perlite. The three stolons were now showing new growth, so were planted in the

'Happy Frog' mixture in a five-inch pan pot, and placed under a dome for a few weeks until they were established.

I had read somewhere that episcias like less light than most gesneriads, and warmth. The lamps on my plant stand were getting old and needed replacing, but I decided not to change the ones on the top shelf and placed the *Episcia* there, where it would hopefully be warmer during the winter months. We have baseboard hot water heat in our home and fortunately there is a heat run and thermostat in the basement where the plants are grown. The temperature is set at 70 degrees F. There is a thermometer on the middle shelf that registers about 72 degrees F when the lights are

on, so it's likely the temperature on the upper shelf would register higher.

When it outgrew this pot, it went into an eight-inch shallow pot, and finally, into a twelve-inch pan pot. The only fertilizer used was fish emulsion with a ratio of NPK, 2-0-4, about every

two weeks. This was also obtained from Mark, and while I don't like to use Fish Emulsion because of the strong odor, this one is mild and not offensive. In between, the plants were top-watered with tap water. The water in this area has a high pH, so it may have counteracted the acidity of the soil and fertilizer. This schedule wasn't planned, but when the plant seemed to be thriving, the routine stayed the same. Surprisingly, even though the fish emulsion has no potassium, there must be plenty of nutrients in the soil that promote blooms, as the



plants produced plenty of flowers. Even so, the leaves continued to grow large and healthy.

The basement becomes very dry in the winter. Years ago, I bought the book *Growing to Show* by Pauline Bartholomew, and in it she recommended placing indoor-outdoor carpeting on the plant trays and keeping it moist. This can be obtained at the local home improvement store where it comes in twelve-foot lengths. I had it cut eighteen-inches wide, then cut into three sections that fit perfectly on the three shelves of my Grow-Cart. It was surprising how quickly the water evaporates. More water must be added every few days to keep it consistently moist. To help keep the humidity in, the stands are covered in plastic (an inexpensive painter's drop cloth), which is cut to fit, leaving the sides open for air circulation.

The plants produced very few stolons; however, there were three that I then rooted up and planted the same way around March 2013. The first plant was entered in the North Coast Gesneriad Club's show in April where it was awarded the Second Best Gesneriad in the show, scoring 99 points. The

plant entered in the fall show had even larger leaves than the one in the spring show, which may have been because of the higher basement humidity during the summer months.

I never dreamed I could ever grow a winning plant once, let alone twice, but 'Karlyn' is a wonderful *Episcia*. It seemed to grow beautifully without any effort on my part. Somehow, I don't think it was what I did, but what this plant was capable of, under the right conditions. I have other episcias that are being grown the same way, but they don't seem to have the vigor displayed by this variety. The only drawback of this plant is that it can grow so large. My growing space is limited, and to my amazement, just before the show it took up half the plant stand!

If you like large plants and have the room, give it a try. Perhaps one of the other large leaf varieties would do as well on this routine.

From *The Violet Connection*, Publication of the Ohio State AVS

LED LIGHTS

By Keith Kennedy

Are you tired of replacing your fluorescent tubes every two years? LED lights can run for up to 50,000 hours. Light emitting diodes "LEDs" are the cheapest form of lighting to run that are available at the present time, but replacing four-foot fluorescent tubes with an LED tube is very expensive, approximately \$80 per tube on average. Also, not everyone has room to fit in a light stand big enough to accommodate them. An alternative may be a smaller stand or shelves to which you can stick the self-adhesive strips of the LED lights. Ability to cut them to almost any length means that you can use them in almost any situation, and as they are 12 volt powered, they can be wired by anyone with some

electrical knowledge and an ability to solder very small connections.

LEDs are powered by 12 volts which can be run off either a 12 volt power supply plugged into a PowerPoint, or if you want to save even more money you can use a 12 volt car or deep cycle battery, which can be charged by a small solar panel. Another option is to run them from a 12 volt battery which can be recharged either by a battery charger during the off peak time or you can plug it into the car cigarette lighter when you go for a drive.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group Inc., Australia



Chimera Propagation — How to Earn Your Stripes

Steve and Donna Turner

If you really want to see a novice grower of African violets squirm, observe their faces when crowning out a chimera! We have watched many a club member moan and cover their face as if viewing a horrible traffic accident. Propagating a chimera can be intimidating, even for the most experienced grower. To increase your collection, you must disregard your fear of killing the plant.

After discovering the African violet hobby, there has not been a time when chimeras have not been growing on our shelves. Our basement consists of nine light racks with one isolation rack on the main floor of our house. We grow mainly standard chimeras, standards, *Streptocarpus*, a few semi-miniatures, and some other Gesneriads. We have always been drawn to the standard chimeras and have devoted 40% of our rack space to the growing and propagation of them.



Propagation

Chimeras can be propagated by allowing naturally-occurring suckers to develop, removing the crown of the plant, or by bloom stalk. They cannot be propagated by a leaf, although we did read in an old AVM that someone was having luck with this method. Donna put this theory to the test last year when she set a leaf from a non-blooming chimera by accident. Out of curiosity, she decided to save one of the plantlets and allow it to bloom. The result was a solid pink blossom with no stripe.

Removing naturally occurring suckers

This is one of the best ways to increase your collection as nature does all the work for you. We

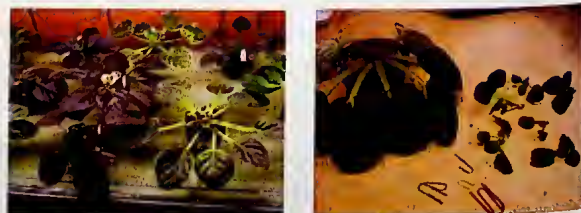
allow any sucker to remain on a chimera until it begins to push the leaves of the mother plant out of position. We always remove the sucker before it permanently distorts the plant. A collection of different "sucker-pluckers" and dental tools work well to prevent damage to the sucker and plant. Once removed, the sucker is then set in soil, watered, and placed under a dome to encourage root growth.



Removing the crown of a plant

This is one area that can make even the veteran grower shudder at the thought. We choose plants that are mature and have numerous rows of leaves. With a sharp X-Acto knife, cut close to the crown, trying to leave two rows of leaves on the mother plant. If the plant is large enough, a middle row of leaves may be removed that will allow you to more easily observe the travel of the knife blade as you make your cut. The original crown should now resemble a sucker. Plant the crown and dome it to encourage root growth. On the mother plant, you should begin to see suckers forming in about two weeks. This method also works well if you lose the center from a standard African violet. We treat the standard as though it were a chimera by pinching out, or removing, the crown of the plant. This method produces babies much faster than setting leaves and tossing the plant.

Harvesting suckers from plants without crowns



The suckers grow faster when taking strength from the mother plant so they are left to grow for three or four months. Harvest time is usually dictated by how much space we have available at the time. After suckers are removed from the "headless" mother plant, the crown is scraped and set back under the lights, so that a second crop may be harvested. We toss the mother plant after the second batch of suckers is collected. It is our experience that every time the mother plant produces another generation of suckers, the greater the chance for sports to occur. Nearly all suckers formed directly on the crown of the plant will be true. Any sucker that forms below the crown has more chance of being a sport.

Our suckers are planted in 4 oz. deli cups. You can purchase these at food service supply stores. The

suckers seem to thrive in the shallow deli cups that are about 1/2 inch shorter than the 3 oz. solo cups everyone tends to favor. Holes are made for drainage, and suckers are potted in our regular potting medium. There are two ways to secure the suckers in place. The easy method is top-watering so the soil compacts at the sucker's neck. If you prefer not to compress the soil, you can secure the sucker in place with plastic paper clips that have been cut in half. All suckers are domed for the next three weeks, until roots begin to form. We test to see if plants are rooted by gently tugging to check for resistance. Plants that have begun to form roots are removed and then placed on mat watering.

Bloom stalk propagation

Bloom stalk propagation takes the longest to see results. This is a safe, but slow, way to propagate chimeras; however,



the success rate for stalk survival is somewhat lower than for leaf cuttings. Bring your patience, as this is a very slow process. It takes about one year to produce a blooming plant. For success you have to find a plant that has good-sized bracts. Some chimera bracts are not large enough for bloom stalk propagation. Plants with red reverse usually do not have large enough bracts and lack sufficient chlorophyll in the bract to sustain it through the

lengthy process. We use only a bloom stalk with freshly opened blossoms. There is also the theory that if the flower buds are removed, the bracts will grow larger. This may or may not be true. Cut the blossom from the stalk and cut the stalk about 1 1/4 inch below the bracts. We cut the end in a 45 degree angle similar to a leaf and plant four to five



stalks in 1 oz. medicine cups (with drain holes) filled with a 50/50 mixture of perlite and vermiculite.

The bloom stalks are then domed and watered with an eye dropper as needed. Plantlets should form in the axil of each bract. Some will begin to produce babies as early as six to eight weeks, and some may sit for months doing nothing. When the plantlets are large enough to work with, remove them from the bloom stalk and root or plant as you would a sucker.

The Keiki Grow method uses the bloom stalk while on the mother plant. Cut the bloom off at the

base of the flower, leaving the flower stalk with bracts attached. Apply the smallest amount of Keiki Grow to the bracts with the end of a toothpick or pin. In time, the stalk will form what is referred to as a "basket." Many years ago, we tried the Keiki Grow method but ended up producing a cluster of suckers and no way to separate them. This is due to using too much of the plant hormone. We decided this method was not for us; however, we still have two bottles of Keiki Grow in our refrigerator. Go figure! When using Keiki Grow, remember that using less is more!

Another method of propagation, tissue culture, is primarily used by larger commercial growers. It is a method that requires a sterile area during the culturing process and produces large quantities of

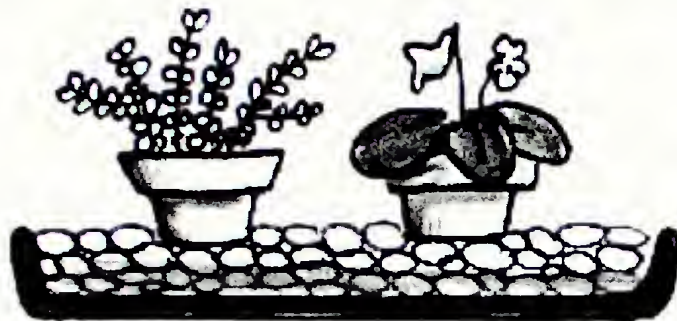
plantlets. This method will not work for us, as while we're clean, we are not that clean. Enough said about that!

Disclaimer

The methods used above are the ones that we have found to work for us. We encourage you to use what works best for you in your unique conditions and skill level. The writers of this article will not be held responsible for the death of your prized plant due to decapitation and/or mutilation. It is strongly recommended that further research be done before attempting any chimeral disfigurement!

From The Violet Connection

Official Publication of the Ohio State AVS



Getting Ready for Showtime

By Allan Reith

If you have been disbudding, all of your plants are green and without buds or bloom. Do not let them bloom until six to seven weeks before the show. Double blooms take a little longer to open so you can give them 6 1/2 to 7 weeks to bloom but the single blossoms don't take quite as long (5 1/2 - 6 wks). The plants should be trying to bloom so it will take a lot of disbudding to keep them cut off.

The lights are on about ten hours a day now and you should be increasing the lights fifteen minutes a week. Keep turning those plants, even those under lights. If you have T-8s the time is shorter (approx. 6 hours) and then increase only ten minutes a week.

You should use a bloom booster fertilizer (10-60-10) once or twice at twelve and ten weeks ahead of the show. If you are disbudding

properly your plants will try to reproduce by growing suckers, so be on the alert for those and remove them promptly. Get rid of all bad leaves, small leaves under larger leaves. Move leaves to fill gaps by forcing them over to the gaps with a plastic straw. Only move 1/8 to 1/4 inch a week so not to break the stem.

Also, check your pot size and correct it now so the plant becomes adjusted to the new pot. The diameter of the plant should be about three times the size of the pot. Since the plant may grow about two to three inches before the show, the diameter of the plant should be a little less than three times the diameter of the pot at this time.

From The Desert Blooms, Publication of the Tucson AVS

Potting Up

by Winston J. Goretsky

My general rule of thumb for repotting is that the existing plant is in one of the following categories:

A younger plant ready to be moved up to a larger pot size, which should allow the plant to reach its full potential; or an older plant which has exhausted its soil and needs to be rejuvenated or refreshed.

In the case of a younger plant being potted up to a larger size pot, I usually make a mold in the larger pot, with the soil firmed around an empty pot the same size as the one in which the plant is currently growing. The objective is to encourage the roots to grow into the new soil surrounding the old root ball.

Using a sharp knife or blade, cut vertical strips, to a depth of 1.5-2 cm (1/2 inch), evenly around the root ball from top to bottom.

The old root ball is easily placed into the mold, and the soil gently firmed around the plant. New roots should begin to quickly grow into the new soil and the plant should show signs of new and vigorous growth within a few weeks.

An older plant may have produced a neck from outer leaves being removed as the plant has aged. It will need to be removed from the pot and set down into the same size pot in which it is currently growing.

The length of the neck determines the amount to be removed from the bottom of the soil ball, allowing the crown of the plant to be level with the lip of the pot.

As the plant ages, and the roots grow old and tired, they may not be as useful or as efficient as they were when younger. New roots are always best encouraged to gain vigor and health. The bottom portion of the root ball is already being removed to allow the plant to be set down to the correct depth and will be growing new roots from that area. The neck of the plant will also produce roots if encouraged by scraping the dry callous and exposing fresh tissue. Rooting hormone may be applied if you choose, as this will help prevent crown rot and also encourage rapid root growth. Many growers find good results with or without using the rooting hormone, so it becomes an experiential preference.

Winston is a past president of AVS of Canada, a Master Judge, and a Judge's Teacher. He is currently serving AVSA as Vice President. He has been growing African violets and gesneriads since about 1974, and loves to encourage others by sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm about his favorite plant.

From Chatter, Journal of the AVS of Canada

Choose the Right Violets

By Kent & Joyce Stork

From Their Book, YOU CAN Grow African Violets

Some violets don't bloom because it isn't in their genes. Some violets bloom wildly in the worst of situations. The genetic make-up of a violet hybrid has a lot to do with its ability to bloom and the way in which it blooms. Some bloom occasionally; some keep a few blossoms up most of the time; some burst into heavy bloom on regular intervals. Some almost never bloom at all. If

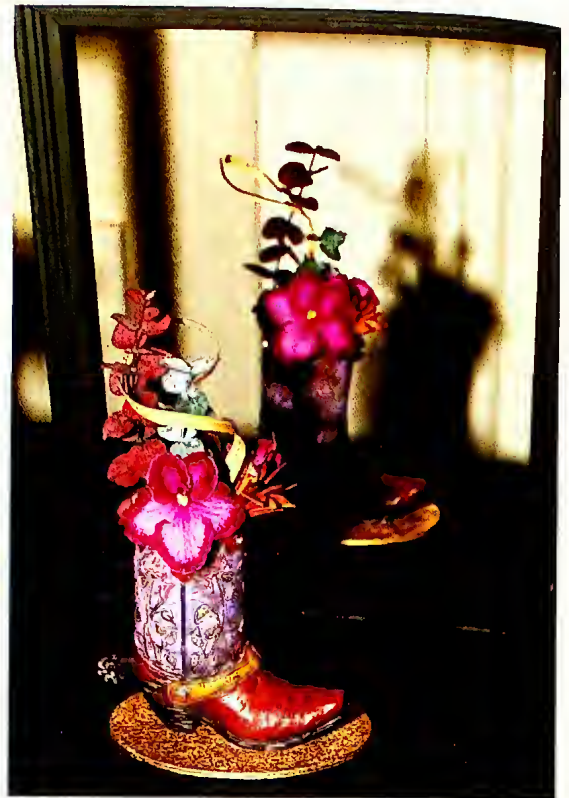
everything else is correct, culturally speaking, and your violet refuses to bloom, it may be genetically at fault. We would throw it away.

Choose new plants carefully, and ask questions about plant's ability to bloom. Most violet growers are very willing to suggest plants that bloom especially well. We all love those plants the best.

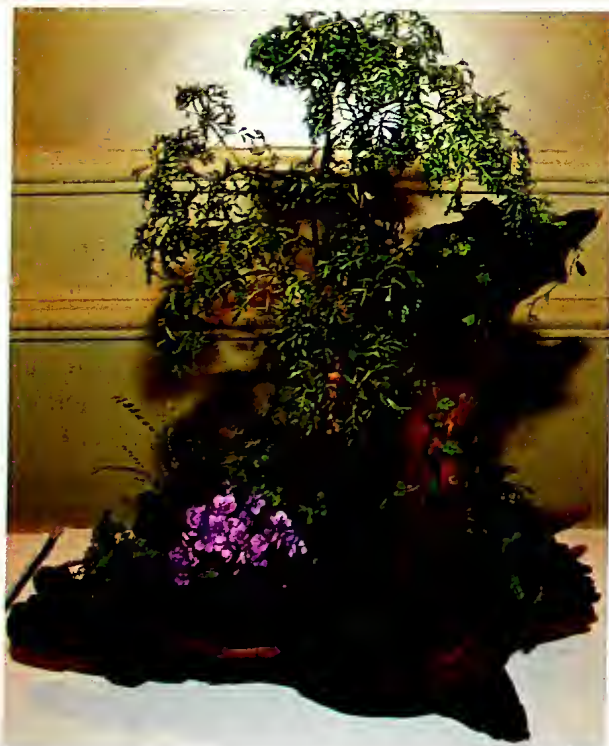
Creatively



Cool Water - Glenda Williams



Boot Scootin' - Jane Rexilius



Wild Cavern - Suzanne Roberts



Chili Cook-off - Rhona Thurman

Designed

Photos by Winston J. Goretsky



Sunday Afternoon Drive - Linda Hall



Indian Powwow - Ruth Goeke



Birding - Rhona Thurman



Edward's Aquifer - Dolores Gibbs

IMPORTANT NOTICE: SENIOR JUDGES

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2014. Send request to Meredith Hall, P. O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. Include check for \$5.00, (payable to AVSA) and proof of three blue ribbons as per AVSA Handbook, 2011 Edition, page 88. Allow three weeks for delivery. **Examinations may be received by attachment using Microsoft Word if requested. Please specify if it will be used as electronic copy or handwritten hard copy. A printed hardcopy (not email) of the exam must be returned to Meredith Hall by October 1, 2014 for grading.**

Those Advanced Judges who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination send check for \$5.00 (payable to AVSA) to Mrs. Hall. Also send the following items of documentation of eligibility per AVSA Handbook:

1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedules of five AVSA shows judged, (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient)
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned, per AVSA Handbook, 2007 Edition, page 88.

Allow three weeks for delivery. Schedules and cards will be returned if a SASE is included with proper amount of postage. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2014 will be returned and application may be made next year.

No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2014. Please include email address, and you will be notified of receipt of exam, or include a self addressed postcard and it will be returned upon arrival of exam.

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Coming Events



May 3 & 4 - WISCONSIN

Oshkosh Violet Society
Annual Judged Show/Sale
St. Jude the Apostle Church
Hall

531 Knapp St.

Oshkosh, WI

May 3 - 10am-4:30pm

May 4 - 11:30am-3:00pm

Info: Kevin Degner

(920) 426-3764

Email :

kevin_degner@sbcglobal.net

May 3 - BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vancouver AV & Gesneriad Society Annual Show/Sale.

Floral Hall, VanDusen Garden

5251 Oak St, Vancouver, BC

1pm- 4pm

Info: Iain James

Email: jhoya02@shaw.ca

May 3 & 4 - OHIO

Cincinnati AVS

Annual Judged Show/ Sale

Eastgate Mall

Interstate 275 & State Route 32

Cincinnati, OH

May 3, Noon - 9 pm

May 4, Noon - 6 pm

Contact: Penny Wichman

Email: pennypwic@aol.com

Or: Al Cenci

Email: acenci@cinci.rr.com

May 3 & 4 - NEW JERSEY

Garden State AV Club Show

Mercer County Community Col-

lege, 1200 Old Trenton Rd

West Windsor, NJ

May 3 - Noon - 4pm

May 4 - 11am - 3pm

[www.princetonol.com/groups/](http://www.princetonol.com/groups/GSAVC)

GSAVC

732-771-7117

May 10 - Wisconsin

Crosstown AVC

Annual Spring Sale

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

3330 Atwood Ave

Madison, WI 53704

Hours: 9am - 4pm

Info: Alice Peterson

(608)298-7324

Email: peters56@tds.net

May 10 - NEW JERSEY

AVC of Burlington County

Annual Judged Show/Sale

Noon - 5pm

Medford Leas Retirement

Community

1 Medford Leas Way

Medford, New Jersey

Free Admission

Info: sskalski@comcast.net

AVCBC.PBWorks.com

May 10 - FLORIDA

African Violet Club of Ocala

Judged Show/Sale

Plant Sales - 10am - 5pm

Show - 11am - 5pm

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caroleeviolets@gmail.com

July 26 & 27 - MISSOURI

Metropolitan St. Louis

African Violet Council

Annual Show/Sale

Missouri Botanical Garden

4344 Shaw Blvd., St. Louis,

MO.

Both Days: 9am - 5pm

Info: Linda Sumski

caribbeandreamer@att.net



Got E-Mail? Start a Club!

By Marge Savage

West Texas African Violet Society



"Why don't you start a club in Midland?" The Pittmans and the Sanders were making me feel welcome at their Spring 1995 Magic Knight African Violet Show and Sale, my very first show of any kind. By Spring 1999, many glorious national and state African violet shows later, I had returned home from the Houston AVSA Convention full of confidence, but LONELY. I was the only person growing African violets in all of West Texas and Southeastern New Mexico! I wanted to belong to an African Violet club!

Forming a solid African Violet club might be a difficult accomplishment given our wide, open spaces, but we West Texans are used to traveling long distances for things we care about. So, we mailed Bev Promersberger, AVSA Affiliate Chairman, and asked for her help. She promptly sent me the Affiliate start-up packet and e-mailed me the names and addresses of the current African Violet Magazine subscribers from Abilene to Lubbock to Carlsbad, New Mexico. Locally, I contacted the USDA Horticulture Extension Agent, a former member of the "club they used to have," and a Velma Lewis. Velma had donated an award given to me at the preceding LSAVC Convention and Show.



"Why don't you start a club in Midland?" The Pittmans and the Sanders were making me feel welcome at their Spring 1995 Magic Knight African Violet Show and Sale, my very first show of any

She later notified me that she was living in nearby Andrews.

All of these people received a letter mid-May which started: "I am interested in having an African Violet Club in our area which is affiliated with the AVSA." The day after the mail-out, three people called! Violet growers! Very excited! With an offer of a meeting place! These people spoke Violet-ese like: Pixie Blue, Pat Hancock and Melvin J. Robey! I was NOT the only soul growing violets in the entire Southwest!

We quickly set a meeting date. Seven brown-fingernailed people attended. During this organizational meeting, I mentioned my wishes to have a club that 1) affiliated with AVSA, 2) help African Violet shows and 3) planned African Violet sales. The old club had died apparently. To keep a club alive, we needed goals and support. They agreed.

Meanwhile, six more replies came in, some by e-mail. One letter arrived postmarked Abilene, 150 miles away, from a grower who was gravely ill. He wanted to help us get started, although he probably wouldn't be able to come to meetings. Eric remained a member until his death last fall.

By August 1999, we had to scramble for chairs to seat fifteen members. We volunteered to be officers, set dues, and named ourselves West Texas African Violet Society. Our meeting place benefactor had lost her business, so we moved to Barnes Noble Booksellers. During the Christmas Holidays, their representative called and said they would no longer allow us meeting space, so I made yet another phone call. Community and Senior Services welcomed us to their large, bright administrative offices where we meet to this day.

During september, Bill Foster e-mailed me. At the monthly meeting of First Nighter African Violet Society of Dallas, Mrs. Mildred Greene offered to sponsor our West Texas African Violet Society with a membership in AVSA. This beautiful ges-



greatly nourished our new club.

Bev Promersberger helped some more. She included us in her African Violet Magazine feature, Affiliate update, and added us to the AVSA website. This publicity yielded interested people and at least one very active new member. In addition, Bev gave us some pointers on how to deal with a club-killing personality. As our Vice-President says, "I feel too good after one of our meetings to let anything bad happen to our club."

So, it is not all a bed of violets. But the good outweighs the challenging, any day! We are affiliates of AVSA and LSAVC; we have held several sales, and by the time you read this, we hope to still be alive and kicking after our very first African Violet Standard Show, "Violets Come to

ture was followed by a welcoming membership in the Lone Star African Violet Council, voted on during their Annual Meeting. This acceptance and support have

Bush Country!" We did not come to this point alone. Wonderful Violet People across Texas and the United States, to whom we owe many thanks, supported and strengthened us along the way.

After our rain-soaked drive home from LSAVC 2000 Convention and Show in Dallas, our Publicity Chairman asked, "What was your favorite part of the show?" So many special memories of that show flooded in. As I sorted through all the kindnesses, the same answer came again and again, "My favorite time? When we were all seated together around the table at the Awards Banquet. I belong to an African Violet Club!"



Lyon's Red Rocket

Exhibited by:

Michele Gazzara

Hybridized by:

P. Sorano/LLyons Greenhouses

Large



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

AFRICAN VIOLET MAGAZINE

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(Effective January 1, 2011)

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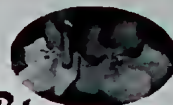
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On this cover:

S. 5f clone orbicularis var. purpurea

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By John T. Carter, President

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

I have just returned home from the Nashville convention, one of the top AVSA conventions I've attended in 26 years. The Holtkamps contributed many hours of effort with their entire family and staff hosting, touring, and preparing displays and centerpieces. The tours on Monday and Tuesday took us through their entire operation which showed us all of the effort that goes into the violets we purchase with the Optimara or Rhapsodie name attached. It was amazing!

I don't have the final numbers yet, but we had close to 380 registered for the convention; 60 were first time attendees, many of them young adults. When I asked first time attendees to stand I was pleased to see that many of them were young and enthusiastic. I met several of them, and they are looking forward to going to Kansas City next year.

The board did not have much business to discuss, but we approved the bylaws change which appeared earlier this year in the AVM. It allows us to conduct meetings electronically. If we have the need, we can send out a notice and schedule an online meeting which board members can login to so that we can conduct business between conventions.

Also seen in Nashville was the test version of First Class as an Android app. Several of us have the test app on our phone or tablet. We appreciate Tom Glembocki who has developed this software for us. It will appear in the Google store after the testing process is completed. The availability will be posted on the website and listed in the magazine. This sure beats carrying your laptop through the showroom, and many liked it.

The Tinani Endowment Fund has slowly been growing. I hope you will be excited that an



anonymous donor is offering to match contributions to the Tinani Endowment Fund up to a cumulative amount of \$15,000, starting now. Your donation of \$100 will result in a \$200 deposit to the fund. Please send your donations to Janet Reimer, or you can donate online. There was not a time limit stated, but let's meet this challenge.

Two weeks before the convention, I represented AVSA at the annual meeting of the Coalition of American Plant Societies. There were a number of good speakers, and the offline discussions with leaders of other plant societies were very interesting. I know there is a feeling by some that it does not matter what other plant societies do and that AVSA will go its own way. However, that attitude has left AVSA on a path by itself, falling behind technology-wise and membership-wise. One group has spent a lot of time and money on creating a new website, creating electronic publications, and moving forward using social media in ways that achieve their mission. When asked how they can afford that with declining membership, their response was that they saw declining membership as a symptom rather than the problem. They feel that if they work to achieve the mission of the society, people will be attracted and interested in becoming members. I think this is food for thought for all of us, whether at the affiliate or national level. Are we seeing the problem or a symptom?

I wish you a wonderful summer and encourage all of you to approach your violet hobby with a passion!

John

Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

The Nashville convention was the most enjoyable convention out of all nineteen that I have attended. The trip to the **Holtkamp Greenhouses** was a great experience, and gave us a look into the complexity of the horticulture operation.

Seeing the rows and rows of African violets at various stages of growth, and the automated systems that carried the potted plants through the finishing processes before they are shipped to African violet growers, was very interesting. The day that I went, there were two tours, one led by owner, **Rienhold Holtkamp, Jr.**, and another led by **Russell Kirschner**, Holtkamp's Account Manager/Inventory Controller.

As with many of members of AVSA, at every convention I looked forward to seeing my close friends, most of whom I only see once a year! I also looked forward to actually meeting those I have gotten to know through email and phone calls.

Dmitry Ozherelyez, who wrote the article "*From Russia with Love: AV Exhibitions in Moscow*," (page 40 in the May/June '14 AVM) was also able to join us in Nashville. We had communicated for some time about the article, and the photos he included of the lovely plants. He brought leaves of several of those plants with him, and they were a huge hit at the Luncheon/Auction.



Dmitry Ozherelyez & Steve Turner, owner of several new Russian AV Leaves



This year, based on a nomination made by **Andrea Worrell**, AVSA was able to honor **Joe Bruns**, the creator of the First Class computer program, as well as First Class 2, and the Show Entries Program. The salute to Joe, who has contributed so much to our society is on page 24.

A commercial member, and one of AVSA's staunchest supporters, **Ralph Robinson**, of the **Violet Barn**, has moved on from being one of our *Question Box* columnists. For the decades of answering our questions, and sharing tips and suggestions on growing better, I want to thank 'Rob' for all the time he and his lovely wife, **Olive**, have given to this column.

The Violet Barn's new ad for the next year is on the back cover of this issue.

I was excited to see that my dear friend, **Bill Price**, wrote the Best Article of 2013 with his "*How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bugs*." See the full listing of all the *Best Articles of 2013* on pages 44 & 45.

When Bill found out that one of the *Question Box* columnist's position was opening, he volunteered to alternate with **Sue Haffner**, our other knowledgeable *Question Box* columnist. (See a note from Bill on page 39, with his contact information.)

(Oops...in the May/June AVM, page 38, I missed a typo in the article "What About Pasteurizing the Mix?." In the second paragraph, the temperature should be 180°.)

Ruth

Office Update

By Amy Carruth, AVSA Office Manager

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Email: avsa@earthlink.net

Summer has arrived, and we are settling in after arriving home from the AVSA Convention and Show in Nashville, TN. It was great to see everyone. I really enjoyed seeing old friends and making new ones. The convention turned out to be the biggest one we have had in six years. We had over sixty first-time convention goers! For those of you who could not attend, be sure to buy the convention DVD that will be out later this year. The Nashville show was beautiful, as were the designs. Thanks to those who entered to make the show so exciting. One of the highlights in Nashville were the tours to the Holtkamp Greenhouses. I was very excited that I had the opportunity to go there. What an experience!

I would like say a big 'thank you' to **Ann-Marie Keene**, **Carol Hixenbaugh**, **Bobbi Johansen**, **Peggy Barber**, **Linda Ingle**, **Steve Covolo**, **Carol Allegretti**, **Carol Burris**, **Kim Clawson**, and **Anna Lammerson** for their generous help at the Registration desk. You each helped me tremendously, making the process easier, and a lot more fun!

I would also like to thank, **Kathi Lahti**, AVSA convention director, for helping to make my first solo convention run so smoothly. She is always available when needed and goes above and be-



yond to make sure the convention is fun for all. Thank you, Kathy, for helping at the Auction this year as well! I hope you're up to it next year!

Ron Davidson, convention chair, and **Russell Kirchner**, convention vice-chair, deserve special recognition for all their hard work, making sure the Nashville convention was a hit.

Members: Please remember to keep your membership information up to date and renew your membership on

time. We don't want you to miss an issue of the AVM. When you order something from our online store, please allow a few weeks to receive it in the mail. If you need something right away, you can call the office (409) 839-4725 and I will be more than happy to assist you.

Canadian Members: *Due to high fees associated with Postal Money Orders, we will no longer be able to accept them as a form of payment.*

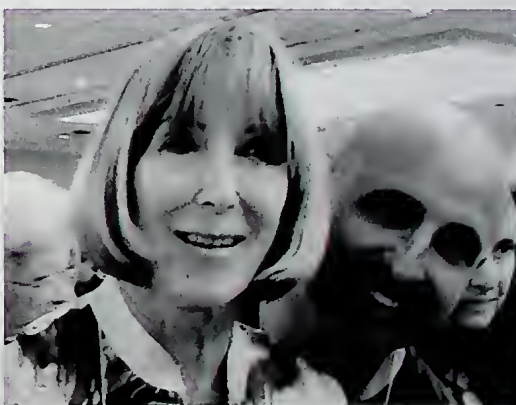
The login for the members section of the website: The username is "member" and the password is the last word of the President's message in each issue of the magazine.

Have a great summer, and I hope to see all of you at the next AVSA Convention and Show in Kansas City, MO, May 24 - 31, 2015!

amy



Amy, Dmitry Ozherelyez & Edna Rourke



Carol Allegretti & Steve Covolo



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Precious Red

Best Miniature In Show

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis

Hybridized by: H. Pittman

Miniature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Lovely Rainbow

*Exhibited and Hybridized by: Marge Farrand
Standard*

Question Box

By Sue Haffner

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Email: sueh@csufresno.edu • haff.sue2@gmail.com

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your violets have had an active and productive year so far. For most of us, the show season has come and gone. My club's show was in early March at the local spring home and garden show, a very popular event. We had many visitors and an extremely successful plant sale. We are fortunate to have recruited some enthusiastic young members, which is what any group needs to remain viable.



Q. My hairdresser told me she has a surefire recipe for nursing sick plants back to health: she just snuggles the sick one up against one that is growing well and, pretty soon, the weak plant has perked up. It's like the strong one transmits some life-giving force to the other one. She says it always works and she's been doing this for years. Her husband brings half-dead plants home from his workplace and she brings them back from the brink with her methods. She has friends who bring her their plants, as well. What do you think? Would you recommend that people use this method?

A. I have to say that, when I first read this, the picture that came into my head was that of a buggy plant being nestled up against a healthy one and the bugs, in effect, saying, "Thank you! Thank you, for providing us a new victim!" But, assuming your hairdresser's observations are accurate, what may account for it is that a plant that had been receiving minimal care was now in an environment where someone was paying attention to it. After all, if the grower was watering and fertilizing the healthy plant, she would, of course, be watering and fertilizing the sick plant, as well. Perhaps the results seemed magical, especially to the husband, who remembered the miserable

specimen that he hauled home. Now, once the plant has been revived, is it returned to the husband's office or shop? If so, is it then ignored until it has to be removed again for resuscitation? Don't get me wrong. I think this is a sweet story, but I would be a bit skeptical of this as a panacea for malingering plants. We certainly don't recommend

that you immediately introduce new violets into your collection. Keep them in isolation for a few weeks to make sure they are not infected with pests or disease.

Q. Does granular fertilizer have an expiration date? I have some that I've used for years, but there's still a lot left in the package. Should I dump it and get a replacement?

A. I am assuming the questioner is referring to the inorganic granular type fertilizer that growers dissolve in water and then apply to their plants. If you check the websites of the manufacturers of these materials they indicate that their products do not have expiration dates. I expect that, as long as the granular material has not been exposed to moisture, it is okay to use. Some products are hygroscopic and solidify after they've been exposed to humidity. I'm not sure if this affects their chemical constituency, or not, though I'm sure the manufacturer has formulated the product to remain chemically stable. If you observe that a particular fertilizer seems no longer to be effective for your plants, by all means replace it. Remember, though, that you shouldn't just pitch fertilizers and other chemicals into the garbage. Check with your local refuse department to find out how to dispose of them.

Q. I started growing African violets last fall and now I'm seeing these little black gnats fly-

ing around. I hadn't seen them before this. Are they something to be concerned about?

A. What you are seeing are fungus gnats. The adults are harmless non-biters, though their larvae feed on decaying organic material in the top inch, or so, of potting mixes. Unless you have a heavy infestation, in which case the larvae may begin to feed on plant roots, they don't present much to be concerned about. Growers tend to notice them in winter and spring when temperatures are cooler and humidity is higher. (I received this letter in March.) The questioner didn't stipulate what sort of potting mix he uses. If it contains a portion of organic material that hadn't been adequately sterilized it could provide a nice host for the gnats. As the gnat eggs and larva reside in the top inch or two of the pot, you can kill them by letting the pot dry out a bit—or just repot the plant into a soilless mix.

(The above correspondent also passed on an amusing anecdote: "Recently I was in [insert name of home improvement store here] and I asked the clerk if they had any African violets. He said he did not know if they had any violets that were African." Yes, it would be nice if the folks hired to work in these garden departments actually knew anything about plants, but I expect that isn't an employment requirement.)

Q. I have a plant in a terrarium that appears to have mealy bugs. Is it okay to spray it? Will that hurt the other plants?

A. First, the questioner didn't stipulate whether or not the plant in question is one that requires terrarium conditions or whether she's referring to a terrarium created for a show or some other purpose with plants that do not necessarily need the extra humidity. If it's the latter, I would recommend removing the buggy plant (and the others, as well), treating it, bagging it, and setting it someplace where it won't infect other plants. I would also remove and discard the soil and wash out the container. Any accessories used—rocks, figurines, whatever—should be cleaned, as well, before being used again. If the

plant in question is a delicate one that needs to be kept in a closed container, that's another issue. Plants that require high humidity tend to have a thin cuticle so that they are less protected than hardier plants. Spraying with a contact solution can actually do some damage. I would, first, take a cutting of the plant, just in case; make sure it's bug-free; then treat it as you would any cutting. Then, instead of a spray, I would use a swab and put isopropyl alcohol directly on the bugs. Check to see if this has caused any damage to the foliage. If it hasn't then perhaps you can take more aggressive methods.

I've heard it recommended that you just drop in a spider and let it do the work for you. It will eat the bugs as long as there are some, before starving. I have great respect for spiders; they eat a lot of bad bugs (good ones, too, I suppose.) But I'm not sure how well they follow orders. Still, this sounds like an interesting project, if you're so inclined.

Q. I've been growing violets for years and my plants do pretty well. But every once in awhile, when I've repotted, a few of them have their old leaves show brown marks or splotches after about 10 days. The center leaves stay okay. Once the old leaves are gone, the plants seem to grow normally. Here's my routine: I cut off the bottom portion of the root ball; a little of the old mix is removed; the stems are scraped and left for 30 minutes to heal. After repotting in my soilless mix, the pots are set in a bowl of water for 8-10 minutes; the water is treated with 10 drops of Superthrive™ per gallon. After that, the plants are put back on their reservoirs of plain water and put under the lights. As the humidity in my plant room is around 40%, I don't feel that I need to enclose the plants in plastic bags. Like I said, I've been repotting this way for years. Also, I had prepared a trailer for repotting, removing all the leaves except three or four in the crowns of each rosette—and about 2 weeks later it started showing the same brown leaf spotting that I saw on the repotted plants (well, except that the marks on the leaves were a lighter brown or dirty cream color.) I had thought the

other plants might be responding to stress, but the trailer hasn't been repotted yet. I'd sure like to know what's going on.

A. I read this communication several times to figure out whether the grower is dealing with one problem or two. It's obvious that the questioner is an experienced grower and observer. I can see that it's possible that the repotted plants are responding to stress. That some varieties respond this way and others don't just shows that not all violets are alike. I think many of us have found that there are just some varieties that won't grow for us, no matter how we struggle with them. As the older leaves on the repotted plants were involved, I wonder if the grower should have removed more leaves when he repotted. As part of the root ball was cut off, the plant is less able to support foliage. It is possibly self-pruning those old leaves—especially as the plants seem

to grow well after they're gone. I emailed the grower to ask if he had made any changes at all in his routine, in the constituents of his soilless mix, in the temperature of his plant room? Had there been any change in his tap water? Did he have experience with these specific varieties before this? If so, did they show this same response? If these are new to him, perhaps they're just more sensitive to disruption. In any case, the syndrome appears not to have been fatal, so far, if I understand his comments.

The issue with the trailer that was prepared for potting but is also showing signs of damage is puzzling. Could this also be a stress reaction? Having most of the foliage removed might trigger stress. I have to admit that I don't have the experience with growing trailers to make sweeping judgments. I guess my only counsel would be to keep an eye on the plant and hope that it grows out of the condition.

In Memory

Fred Hill

The Garden State AVC recently lost lifetime member and African violet enthusiast, Fred Hill. A Navy veteran, and schoolteacher, Fred held numerous leadership positions in local and national African violet clubs. He also grew award-winning plants. Fred joined the Bergen County AVC and began growing violets in the 1980s. He was a member of AVSA, Garden State AVC, the NJ Council of AV Judges, and the Tri-state AV Council. Fred was a skilled Master Judge, and shared his love of the species with everyone. Fred will be remembered for his kindness, sense of humor, and wit.

Patricia (Patsy) Harms

Exuberant good humor marked the life of Patsy Harms, who passed away at the age of eighty. She was a leader in the African violet world, and for more than twenty-five years she was a stalwart in the Lake Shore AVS (IL), serving in almost every capacity from Show Chairman to President. For the past several years as the membership waned, she single-handedly held the group together. She was also active in the Illinois AV Society. Not only was she a good grower, but she also specialized in design. Patsy will be

sorely by many who shared the gift of her friendship.

Roberta Williams

Roberta Williams was a member of the Columbus AVS for over thirty years, and past member of Ohio State AVS and AVSA. She headed the telephone committee for Columbus for a long time and put in many hours working Ways and Means at the local show. She was known for growing beautiful episcias. Roberta was an honorary member of our Columbus club and loved her African violets.

Tom Ryan

Tom Ryan, 80, passed away on January 2, 2014. A US Army Veteran, Tom served in the Korean War. He was an active member of the New York State AVS at the national, state, and local levels for many years. A longtime Director, he also documented many years of conventions through his photography. Tom supported his wife, Mary, in her love of African violets, and they shared their many duties for the NYSAVS. Tom was also a member of the AVG of Syracuse and the AVG of Rochester.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Primulina linearifolia

Exhibited by: Elmer Godeny

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwp.net

Pat Hancock – Middletown, OH

'Buckeye Claret Wine' (10648)

02/28/2014 (P. Hancock) Single-semidouble dark burgundy-wine ruffled star. **Variegated** dark green, pink and cream, plain, glossy/red back. **Large**

'Buckeye Party Streamers' (10649)

02/28/2014 (P. Hancock) Semidouble-double purple ruffled pansy/pink fantasy, thin white edge. **Variegated** medium green and cream, plain. **Large**

'Buckeye Patent Pending' (10650)

02/28/2014 (P. Hancock) Semidouble-double medium blue frilled pansy/pink fantasy, variable white-green edge. **Variegated** medium green and cream, plain, glossy. **Large**

Reinhold Holtkamp, Sr. – Nashville, TN

'Optimara AnnaBelle' (10651) 02/28/2014 (R. Holtkamp) Single light blue sticktite bell. Dark green, pointed/red back. **Standard**

'Optimara EverBeautiful' (10652) 02/28/2014 (R. Holtkamp) Single-semidouble two-tone lavender frilled pansy/white edge. Dark green, plain, glossy, wavy, hairy, scalloped/red back. **Large**

'Optimara EverGlory' (10653) 02/28/2014 (R. Holtkamp) Single pink two-tone sticktite frilled pansy/green-white edge. Medium green, plain, glossy, wavy, scalloped. **Large**

'Optimara EverJoy' (10654) 02/28/2014 (R. Holtkamp) Single-semidouble purple-burgundy frilled pansy/variable green edge. Medium green, hairy, ruffled, wavy. **Large**

'Optimara EverPrecious' (10655) 02/28/2014 (R. Holtkamp) Single-semidouble white frilled pansy/thin purple band, variable green edge. Medium green, glossy, ruffled, wavy. **Large**

'Optimara EverRejoice' (10656) 02/28/2014 (R. Holtkamp) Single-semidouble salmon-pink frilled pansy/variable green edge. Medium green, ruffled, glossy/red back. **Large**



'Optimara EverSpecial' (10657) 02/28/2014 (R. Holtkamp) Semidouble dark blue frilled pansy/variable green edge. Dark green, glossy, wavy, ruffled/red back. **Large**

'Optimara EverYoung' (10658) 02/28/2014 (R. Holtkamp) Single pink two-tone sticktite frilled pansy. Medium green, glossy, ruffled. **Large**

'Optimara IsaBelle' (10659) 02/28/2014 (R. Holtkamp) Single light pink sticktite bell. Dark green, pointed/red back. **Standard**

Martin Holtkamp – Nashville, TN

'Optimara myCharm' (10660) 02/28/2014 (M. Holtkamp) Single white sticktite pansy/pink-red eye. Medium green, plain. **Standard**

'Optimara myDelight' (10661) 02/28/2014 (M. Holtkamp) Semidouble-double pink ruffled/thin white edge. Dark green, ovate, hairy/red back. **Standard**

'Optimara myDesire' (10662) 02/28/2014 (M. Holtkamp) Single white sticktite pansy/rose-pink eye. Medium green, heart-shaped, quilted, hairy/red back. **Standard**

'Optimara myDream' (10663) 02/28/2014 (M. Holtkamp) Single white sticktite large star/purple eye. Medium green, plain, hairy/red back. **Standard**

'Optimara myJoy' (10664) 02/28/2014 (M. Holtkamp) Single white sticktite pansy/blue-purple eye. Medium green, heart-shaped, pointed, pebbled. **Standard**

'Optimara myLove' (10665) 02/28/2014 (M. Holtkamp) Single white sticktite large star/red-magenta eye. Medium green, plain, heart-shaped, hairy, serrated. **Standard**

'Optimara myPassion' (10666) 02/28/2014 (M. Holtkamp) Single white sticktite star/pink eye. Dark green, heart-shaped, quilted, hairy, serrated/red back. **Standard**

'Optimara myTemptation' (10667) 02/28/2014 (M. Holtkamp) Single white sticktite pansy/large pink eye. Medium green, heart-shaped, pointed, serrated. **Standard**

Robert Kurzynski – Clifton, NJ

- 'Jersey Blue Ice' (10668) 03/18/2014 (R. Kuzynski) Semidouble white pansy/variable blue markings. **Variegated** medium green and white, quilted. **Semiminiature**
- 'Jersey Fantasy Trail' (10669) 03/18/2014 (R. Kuzynski) Semidouble-double pink pansy/purple fantasy. Medium green, pointed, quilted. **Semiminiature trailer**
- 'Jersey Jackpot' (10670) 03/18/2014 (R. Kuzynski) Single white sticktite bell/pink blush. **Crown variegated** medium green and cream, quilted. **Miniature**
- 'Jersey Starlight Trail' (10671) 03/18/2014 (R. Kuzynski) Semidouble white pansy/pink eye. **Crown variegated** medium green and cream, quilted. **Semiminiature trailer**
- 'Jersey Willow Rose Trail' (10672) 03/18/2014 (R. Kuzynski) Semidouble white pansy/fuchsia eye. **Crown variegated** medium green and cream, plain. **Semiminiature trailer**

Paul Sorano – Dolgeville, NY

- 'Circus Fascination' (10673) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble lavender-plum star/pink fantasy, frilled raspberry edge.. Dark green, plain/red back. **Standard**
- 'Circus Star' (10674) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single-semidouble chimera pink star/lavender-blue stripe, dark blue fantasy throughout. **Variegated** medium green and white, pointed, quilted. **Standard**
- 'Crystal Lake' (10675) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Double chimera white star/blue stripe. Dark green, quilted/red back. **Standard**
- 'Destiny' (10676) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single-semidouble magenta pansy/white stripe, ruffled green edge. **Variegated** medium green and white, ruffled. **Standard**
- 'Edge of Darkness' (10677) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble dark purple star/frilled white edge. **Variegated** dark green and ivory, serrated/red back. **Large**

'Geyser of Color' (10678) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single pink sticktite star/purple fantasy. **Variegated** medium green and beige, spooned, quilted. **Standard**

'Instant Attraction' (10679) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble dark pink pansy/blue fantasy, frilled white edge. Dark green, quilted/red back. **Standard**

'Irish Lassie' (10680) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble pink two-tone star/frilled green edge. Dark green, wavy/red back. **Standard**

'Lil Spitfire' (10681) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Single dark fuchsia pansy/thin white edge. Dark green, quilted. **Semiminiature**

'No Regrets' (10682) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Double fuchsia-red large star/frilled white edge. Medium green, plain, quilted. **Standard**

'Rosy Pink' (10683) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Double pink frilled star/random white edge. Dark green, heart-shaped, quilted, serrated. **Semiminiature**

'Sister's Secrets' (10684) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble dark coral-red star/fuchsia fantasy, frilled white edge. Dark green, quilted, serrated/red back. **Standard**

'Twinkle Twirl' (10685) 03/19/2014 (Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses) Semidouble-double two-tone pink frilled pansy/mauve blush, blue fantasy, light pink edge. Dark green, quilted. **Standard**

REGISTRATION CHANGE

The following have been changed by the hybridizer:

'Optimara EverGrace' (9123) Single white sticktite frilled pansy/*medium blue eye, band, variable light green edge.* [Changes in italics.]

'Optimara EverHarmony' (9124) Change from "Single" to "Single-semidouble." Also change from **Standard** to **Large**.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Dolores

Exhibited by: Catherine Thompson

Hybridized by: C. Raskopf

Standard



Edge of Night

Exhibited by:

Paul Sorano

Hybridized by:

Baker

Standard

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Petrocosmea species 'HT-2'

Exhibited by:
Gary Thurman



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Small Talk

By Laurel D. Goretsky

32 Scimitar Point N.W. • Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Email: Laurel@Goretsky.ca

Another successful convention has come and gone. We come for reconnecting with friends and making new ones. We enjoy the food and inspiring workshops. We wait in anticipation for the showroom to open and are not disappointed with so many beautiful plants to admire.

In the amateur horticulture division, there were many delightful miniatures and semiminiatures. The 3rd Best African Violet was won by Ben Haning from Allen, TX, with 'Rob's Boolaroo.' 'Rob's Boolaroo' is a semiminature trailer. The blossoms are semidouble, light pink stickite pansy with bright blue fantasy. The foliage is medium green. Ben also had the best AVSA collection of miniatures/semiminiatures with the semiminature trailers 'Rob's Boolaroo,' 'Rob's Vanilla Trail,' and 'Milky Way Trail.' 'Rob's Vanilla Trail,' has double cream to white blush pansy blossoms. The leaves are dark green and quilted, serrated, and pointed. Rounding out the collection is 'Milky Way Trail.' The blossoms on this plant are single to semidouble white pansy. The leaves are medium green, heart-shaped, and quilted.

Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN, won the Best Miniature African violet with 'Precious Red.' This delightful miniature has semidouble-double dark red pansy blossoms. The foliage is dark green and plain, with a red back. Debbie also won the Best Semiminature in Show with 'Jersey Sugar Plums.' This plant has semidouble-double purple two-tone pansy blossoms. The leaves are variegated medium green, cream and white. Debbie had many other accomplishments in the show, but I will just highlight one last win



for her which was the best Robinson collection with the semiminiatures 'Rob's Plaid Skirt,' 'Rob's Dodo Bird,' and 'Rob's Slap Happy.' 'Rob's Plaid Skirt' has semidouble pink star blossoms with blue fantasy and a white edge. The leaves are crown variegated dark green, yellow and beige. 'Rob's Dodo Bird' has semidouble medium blue pansy blossoms with a white edge. The leaves are crown-variegated, medium to dark green, white and yellow. Finally, 'Rob's Slap Happy' has semidouble dark coral pansy blossoms. The leaves are crown variegated dark green, white, cream and pink.

One last area that I wanted to mention in the amateur horticulture division is the Holtkamp collections. The first, second, and third Holtkamp collections were all won by miniature and semiminature plants. Yay! for the little guys! Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN won the Best Holtkamp Collection with the miniatures 'Optimara Little Ruby,' 'Optimara Little Pearl,' and 'Optimara Rose Quartz.' 'Optimara Little Ruby' has single-semidouble purple-red blossoms. The leaves are medium green, ovate, pointed, hairy and glossy. 'Optimara Little Pearl' has single-semidouble white-blush blossoms against medium green, heart-shaped foliage. One of my personal favorites, 'Optimara Rose Quartz,' has single-semidouble pink blossoms. The leaves are medium green, ovate, pointed, glossy and hairy.

A special thank you, again, to Holtkamp Greenhouses, Lone Star African Violet Council, and the Mid Atlantic African Violet Society for a fabulous time.

Until next time, happy growing!





Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rebel's Restless Heart

Exhibited by: Donna Brining

Hybridized by: R. Bann

Standard

In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

In last issue's column, I mentioned trying to save some of our heritage African violets by going back to the growing conditions that were used when these plants were developed or popular. I received a communication with a warning that I felt I should pass on. One grower was already using an older soil recipe that included dried manure as one of the ingredients. While this soil mix had been successful in the past, her plants have been suffering from poor growth, yellow foliage, and other problems, and she decided to have the plants and soil thoroughly tested. Imagine her surprise that the problem was finally traced to high salt levels in her soil mix. Further examination found that the salt was coming from the manure. Repotting her plants in a soil mix without the manure is correcting her problem. It just goes to show that the soil additives that we use today may NOT be the same as those sold in days gone by. Try using older soil mix formulations for your heritage plants, but be careful about the ingredients. Also remember not to repot all of your plants into a new soil mix, but experiment with a few and see how they grow first before repotting the rest.

Q: Many in our club are growing 'Tina's April Fantasy'. This plant is unusual in that it has white flowers with small specks of blue fantasy markings. The foliage is pale green with small darker dots in it. The foliage markings are reminiscent of birthmarks, but only cover about 1% of the foliage area. How can we breed for more plants with these characteristics?

A: To conserve the traits, I'd suggest crossing 'Tina's April Fantasy' to another white flowered plant with light green foliage. I don't think that the birth marking in the leaves would follow ma-



ternal inheritance, but you might try using 'Tina's April Fantasy' as the seed parent just in case. The fantasy markings of the flowers should be a dominant trait and show in at least 50% of the offspring, especially if crossed to white. Using a light green foliage plant should conserve both the white background of the fantasy flowers and the pale color of the foliage. I

would fear that crossing to anything darker, either in foliage or in flowers would mask the traits you are trying to conserve.

Be forewarned that birth marking is notoriously unstable, and you should probably select for plants that have the smallest speckles of darker spots like those in 'Tina's April Fantasy'. Once the birth marks spread in coverage in the foliage, you are likely to lose both the unique foliage and the white in the fantasy flowers. This is a very interesting combination of traits, and I hope you are successful in hybridizing efforts.

Q: Some of my older wasp flowered plants with bustled foliage such as 'Date's Pink Fly' and 'Celery' tend to go multiple crown. Is this due to the genetics of the plant?

A: The multiple crown event you reported for these plants is sometimes called a zipper (there are other names for it too). It is an event that happens more commonly in the wasp flowered/bustled foliage plants than other types of African violets. In my experience, once the crown mutates it is nearly impossible to groom it back to a single crown. Even leaves or suckers taken from the crown seem to continue to express the trait. This event is also known in other gesneriads. Some striking gesneriad show plants are sometimes created this way.

I would conclude that this is a genetic based

event. Since it happens more commonly in the wasp flower/bustled foliage plants, it may be due to the mutation that cause the leaves to grow into the bustled foliage. This may be due to an over expression of some growth factor that causes the apical meristem to lose its structure or layers. Once the apical meristem loses its structure, the cell growth becomes uncontrolled, and a multiple crown is produced. An analogy would be that this is similar to a tumor or cancer where control of the cell growth has been lost.

About the only way I've found to correct the problem is to take a leaf cutting where the growth was still normal and try restarting the plant. Leaves taken from the multiple crown area, suckers, or splitting up the crown just seems to produce more plants with the same problem.

Q: Now that summer has arrived, my African violets are showing signs of heat stress. Is it possible to breed for plants with more heat tolerance?

A: Yes, within certain limits, a hybridizer could breed or select for increased heat tolerance in African violets. The way to do this would be to place a number of cultivars in high heat conditions and use the survivors as parents in hybridizing. Repeat this heat tolerance selection on the F1 seedlings. After several generations of selection for heat tolerance, the hybridizer should have plants that will tolerate higher growing temperatures.

The risk is that heat tolerance might be linked to undesirable traits such as single dropping blooms or unruly foliage. You might get the trait

you want (heat tolerance) at the risk of losing other desirable traits in blooms in foliage.

A reverse case of this situation can be seen in the Russian hybrids. Most of them were developed and grown at cooler conditions due to differences in home heating systems in Russia. As a group, they often do better for our northern growers, on windowsills or in cooler basements. If your Russian cultivars are suffering from the summer heat, you might try moving them into the coolest growing areas you have available.

Q: I've noticed that the African violet relative, the African Primrose, is currently having an explosion of new color types, variegated foliage, scent and sizes. Since the two plants are so closely related, can we expect a similar surge in new characteristics in African violets?

A: Yes, there have been many new types of African Primrose, genus *Streptocarpus* developed lately, and this genus is probably the ancestor to our African violets, genus *Saintpaulia*. One can hope that the new genetic traits in *Streptocarpus* will also show up in African violets, but that remains to be seen. The genus *Streptocarpus*, being a much older genus, has many more species and types than does genus *Saintpaulia*. This has given the *Streptocarpus* hybridizers many more unique plants to tap into for new genetic traits. The gene pool for African violets is more limited, but also has shown a high tendency to mutate. In any event, it is worth studying the new *Streptocarpus* hybrids for ideas for what might be done with African violets.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

2015 Kansas City, MO
AVSA Convention Dates:
May 24 - May 31, 2015



Optimara Little Arapahoe

Exhibited by:

Debbie McInnis

Hybridized by:

Holtkamp

Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Oolong

Exhibited by:

Sandy Skalski

Hybridized by:

R. Robinson

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

A Family Portrait

By Mel Grice

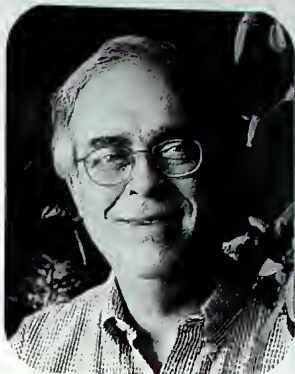
2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, OH

Email: <melsgrice@earthlink.net

Sinningia 'Esther'

Sinningia 'Esther' attracted a lot of well-deserved attention recently when a photo was posted on Gesneriophiles. Joe Palagonia from Huntington Station, NY received runner-up to Best in Show at the Long Island Gesneriad Society (LIGS) show with a superbly grown specimen of *Sinningia* 'Esther'. It was hybridized by a longtime LIGS member who is now deceased so the exact parentage is lost forever. Sherman Paur received some of the seeds and planted them. He grew them and selected the plant with the most desirable characteristics, naming it for his wife.

I was fortunate to obtain a start of this highly desirable hybrid when I visited the Long Island show a few years ago. *Sinningia* 'Esther' is a scarlet *Sinningia cardinalis* peloric hybrid crossed with something else. It makes a number of crowns each with bright red flowers at the tips. It does not grow as tall as many *Sinningia cardinalis* hybrids. It



has an upright growth pattern which means that it tends to grow towards the light with spaces between the leaves, thus producing a stem. It can be grown flatter if given quite a bit of light — say under T-8 or T-5 lights placed only a few inches above the plant. Propagation of *Sinningia* 'Esther' is easy by taking crown cuttings. I insert an inch of the

crown's stem into my rooting mix — equal parts Pro-Mix, perlite, and vermiculite. I first dip the cut end into Clonex® to help the cut end root and form a tuber. The cutting is placed in its own plastic bag while rooting. Four months later, I should have a well-rooted plant that needs to be repotted into the next size pot so that the new tuber can continue to grow larger.

I have been busy propagating starts of *Sinningia* 'Esther' for plant sales at the Gesneriad Society convention in Nashville this July!



Photo Credit: Paul Susi

"And the winners are ..."

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

By Mary J. Corondan

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

AVS OF GREATER TULSA, OK – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rodeo Country, Outer Limits, Rebel's Minnesota Haze; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Antique Rose, Mac's Scorching Sun, Rob's Denim Demon; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Rob's June Bug; Best Standard: Sunny Salmon; Best Trailer: Rob's Humpty Doo; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Antique Rose; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Carol Rice**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Mather E, **Sherrie Wallace**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina linearifolia*, **Elmer Godeny**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Judith Carter**.



Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *ionantha* var. *ionantha*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Barbara Kelly**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Sylvia Leeds**.

CENTRAL FLORIDA AVS, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, Optimara Glacier, Lucien Croteau, **Sharon Granicy**. Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Senk's Vespa Verde; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *tongwensis*, **Renee Wilson**. Best Standard: Optimara Modesty, **Lola Sutherland**. Best Miniature: Gleeful Elk, **Mary Thompson**. Best Trailer: Lil Runaround, **Viktoria Granicy**. Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Priscilla', **Mary Louise Newton**. Best Design, **Sue Haffner**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Michelle Vandergon**. Design Sweepstakes, **Connie Morton**.

DALLAS METRO AV CLUBS, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Mariah, Optimara North Carolina, Rebel's Rose Bud; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jersey Lilacs, Jolly Splashy, Shy Blue; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Fireball, **Mary Corondan**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Orchid, Cloud Puff, Jolly Apollo; Best Miniature: Jolly Bambino; Best Trailer: Foster Trail, **Hortense Pittman**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Frosty Frolic; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Coco', **Meredith Hall**. Best

FANTASY AVC, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Sunset Kiss, Cajun Popcorn, Easter Angel, **Luke Reyer**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Satin Rose, Jolly Texan, Jolly Sunrise; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Texan; Best Trailer: Pacific Pearl; Best Design, **Sally Scaggs**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Optimara EverGrace; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Pam Lund**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina longgangensis*, **Thad Scaggs**. Design Sweepstakes, **Pat Diebold**.

FIRST AUSTIN AVS, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Kamennyi Tsvetok, Candy Swirls, Green Horizon; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kathy Brewster**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Lace Petticoats, Sunlit Sugar Plum, Pink Energy; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Mini Sota, Ness' Satin Rose, Dean's Lucienne, **Susan Kautz**. 2nd Best Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Bahama Mama, Rob's Pink Puff, Jolly Eyes; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Miriwinini; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone *rupicola* **Glenda Williams**. Best Miniature: Precious Red, **Marjorie Bullard**. Best Semiminiature: Cool Blue, **JoAnne Rogers**. Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Bright Eyes', **Dolores Gibbs**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Danny Tidwell**.

FIRST LAKELAND AVS, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Royal Flair, Sugar Plum Dream, Ness' Candy Pink; Best in Show/Best Standard: Sugar Plum Dream; Best Trailer: Rob's Gundaroo; Best Gesneriad:

Primulina USBRG 98-083; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Christel Collier**. Best Semiminiature: Sassy Sister; Best Miniature: Jolly Sailor; Design Sweepstakes, **Mary Jane DiLorenzo**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone Cha Simba, **Carol Ann Burrell**. Best Design, **Violet Hendershot**.

HEART OF JACKSONVILLE AVS, FL – Winners: Best in Show/Best Standard: Perfect Harmony, **Sharon Gartner**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Dust Storm; Best Miniature: Rob's Lilliputian, **Linda McQueen**. Best Trailer: Baby Brian; Best Gesneriad: *primulina linearifolia*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Bobbi Johannsen**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa*, **Carol Hixenbaugh**. Best Design, **Nancy Sacco**.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN VIOLET COUNCIL, CO – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Leprechaun Charm, Rebel's Rhubarb Frost, Picasso; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Angel Glitter, Cherry Princess, Rob's Hand Puppet; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Sharon Shaw**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Ness' Satin Rose, Rob's Slap Happy; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Fire, **Byron McKittrick**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa* Mather E, *Saintpaulia* 5h clone *velutina*, *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone *tongwensis*; Best Trailer: Rob's Vanilla Trail; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa* Mather E, **Irina Nicholson**. Best Miniature: Rob's Love Bite, **Melissa Shopnitz**. Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Spirit', **Pat Eloë**. Best Design, **Trudy Brekel**. Design Sweepstakes, **Janet Rutledge**.

SOUTH COAST AVS, CA – Winners: Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Chilly Willy, Orchard's Bumble Magnet, Windsome; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy; Best Semiminiature: Thunder Surprise; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Gay Wilson**. Best Standard: Marshlands; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Leonard Re**. Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Falling Star'; Best Design, **Jacquie Eisenhut**. Design Sweepstakes, **Elaine Re**.

SPRING BRANCH AVC, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Frosted Whisper, Ma's Soiree, Buckeye Sentimental Reasons; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Dear, Jolly Texan, Jolly Splashy; Best in Show/Best Standard: Tineke; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Pink Buttercups; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Best Trailer: Deer Trail; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kay Black**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina tabacum*; Design Sweepstakes, **Jane Rexilius**. Best Design, **Ruth Goeke**.

TAMPA AVS, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Fisherman's Paradise, Eskimo Kisses, Buckeye Scrumptious; Best in Show/Best Standard: Fisherman's Paradise; Best Trailer: Ramblin' Dots; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Kee Wee'; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Mary Lou Harden**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Pink Puff, Jolly Joy, Jolly Fun, **Linda Schwambach**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Dear, Rob's Antique Rose, Rob's Fuzzy Navel, **Glenn Shelton**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Antique Rose, **Sandra Kerns**. Best Miniature: Roller Rink, **Jim Boyer**.

TUCSON AVS, AZ – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Easter Parade, Ma's Jamaican Farewell; Saint Paul; Best in Show/Best Standard: EK-Nebesnaia Lazur, **Barbara Reith**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Amethyst, The King, Mary Craig; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Rob's Outer Orbit, Ness' Satin Rose; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Outer Orbit; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Pink Gator', **Kathy Bell**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Honey Blue Ace, Precious Red, Persian Prince; Best Miniature: Precious Red, **Gloria Williams**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei*, *Saintpaulia* 8 clone Cha Simba, *Saintpaulia* 5h clone *velutina*; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone Cha Simba, **Allan Reith, Sr.** 2nd Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 5a clone *grandifolia* #237, *Saintpaulia* 5a clone #299, *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Silver; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Anne-Lee Tomczyk**. Best Trailer: Rob's Gundaroo, **Daniel Edmondson**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Terry Richey**.

Joe Bruns Receives the AVSA Bronze Medal

By Andrea L. Worrell

When I think of "Achievement in Horticultural Excellence," I can't think of a more deserving person than Joe Bruns, and therefore, I nominate him to receive the AVSA Bronze Medal Award. Joe's achievements and contributions to the African violet world and to AVSA began decades ago and continue to this day.

This nomination could not begin without mentioning Janice Bruns, who deserves recognition in her own right, and I believe was a motivating force and inspiration for many of Joe's accomplishments. Back in the early '80's, Jan purchased her first African violet and a book on growing. By 1985, Jan was seriously into the hobby, quickly becoming a well respected and recognized grower and decorated shower. Since both of them fully participated and supported each other's hobbies and interests, Joe was the one who allowed Jan's love for the hobby to flourish. With Jan in a wheelchair, Joe built her plant stands, studied lights, helped her with supplies, and also jumped all-in to the hobby.

In the beginning, Joe built Jan a lightstand that held twenty-four violets, and said he didn't see why she would need any more. One stand became four, four became two bedrooms, and soon a whole new room addition was built. They were both very serious by now. As members of the Barrington Bloomers local violet club and the Illinois AVS, they became active in local and state AVSA-sponsored violet shows. Joe would typically work classifications. As some of us may remember, back in those days to find and identify violets, you first searched the yearly supplements, and

then if there were no updates or revisions, the Master Variety list was searched. Joe saw this process as working "backwards," and therefore inefficient. Joe was writing computer programs at the time, and he thought, "Well, that's a good thing for a computer program." A star was born.

In approximately 1997, the very first version of First Class, (named for the previously released 29¢ African violet stamp, and coincidentally is also a perfect description of the inventor himself), was written for Windows 3.1. When he offered it to AVSA, it was just a name and hybridizer search, and not yet available to the public. Naturally, its

popularity was instantaneous, and requests for more were pouring in. People wanted foliage descriptions, blossom descriptions, variety descriptions, etc. Joe continually worked diligently to accommodate every request. Joe enlisted beta testers to fine-tune the additions, each time, making First Class better, more comprehensive, and more efficient. The demand

was growing, but Joe would not release it to the public unless he could get it

to download in less than a minute. He got it down to 50 seconds, and in Sept. 2002, Version 2 was introduced. The rest is history.

Since then, as most of us know, First Class has come a long way. It can print labels, store lists, show pictures, organize searches, update information via the web, among other things, and currently features and manages over 17,000 African violet varieties. But here's something you may not know: Joe is continually working to improve



President John Carter with
Bronze Medal Winner, Joe Bruns
Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

First Class. As you consider this, the features that are near release and in-the-works, are as groundbreaking and exciting as the original introduction.

Can you imagine just the physical aspect of lugging around the ever increasing Master Variety List and the addendums? Joe Bruns has continued, over three decades to improve, maintain, and supply AVSA, at his own expense and time contribution, a product crucial to our everyday use and enjoyment of this hobby.

Without repeating a similar history, Joe Bruns also gave us the Entries program. If you have ever been to, or participated in an AVSA sponsored show, you have benefitted from the Entries program.

If you have just been a show viewer, you have seen the professional, clearly printed cards allowing you to easily read the varieties' and exhibitors' names. You see lovely awards cards, describing the award. If you have worked the show, you have seen the ease and organization of entering and organizing all of the exhibitor's and plant information. Does anyone remember scrambling to get everything into the entry books while the judges were at lunch? If you have recently judged the show, you now have instantaneous clerk's sheets, collection forms, class counts, special awards, etc. This could not be done without the coordination between the two programs, First Class and Entries.

One of Joe's more obvious contributions is his

management of the Registration Report, another crucial element required for the advancement and management of our hobby. Joe takes the time, possesses the skills and attention to detail required to maintain this register, and is in constant contact with hybridizers, making sure their plant is logged and represented properly. For many hybridizers, shows introduce a plant. For growers and showers, we flock to see what's new.

As a Judge, Joe is always fair, knowing everything about all the plants, and is often the stabilizing force of a panel. It was from Joe that I learned the phrase "foliage first," and it has been the basis of any of my success ever since.

Joe and Jan formed the Lake Shore AVS in the early '90's, and they helped form the Fox Valley AVS in the mid '90's. On the state level, Joe has maintained a Board position for the Illinois AVS for over thirty years. Joe was also a major force in getting the 2001 National Convention in Chicago.

For over four decades, Joe has selflessly strived to and achieved horticultural excellence in the advancement of African violets. Early on, Joe saw a need. He saw things working backwards, and he turned it around to move it forward. He has been moving the African violet world forward ever since.



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

Cajun's Star Studded

Exhibited by:

Susan Arnao

Hybridized by:

B. Thibodeaux

Standard

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

Janet Riemer • 256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd., Pennington, NJ 08534

Donations received from: February 26, 2014 – April 28, 2014 • Total = \$273.00

Geneva



Cedar Valley African Violet Club and Friends

In memory of Ray Blanchard

Alice Inlow

Two-tone



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Thumbprint



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Multicolor

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Geneva



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In memory of Ann Koopman

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*In lieu of judges' expenses for Joyce Stenger and
John Nabers*

In memory of Joyee's brother David Sabol
Susan Storey, San Marcos, TX

*In memory of Aloha Rhodes, "a good friend and
an excellent grower of African violets."*

Multicolor



African Violet Club of Morris County, NJ

*In lieu of judges' travel expenses: for
the Website: Judy Smith and Sue Hanna;
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Delaware African Violet and Gesneriad Society

*In lieu of judges' travel expenses for Sue
Hanna, Betsy Branson, Barbara Jones, Peggy
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*In memory of Richard Wiener, husband of
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Two-tone

Columbus African Violet Society, Ohio:

Annual donation

Loveland Sweetheart Violettes Society, Loveland, CO.

In honor of Harry Weber

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Tri-state African Violet Council, NJ

*In lieu of judges' expenses for the 2013 show, in
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Fiseher*

Thumbprint



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Nicholas Day, Long Island City, NY

Victoria Frey, Old Bridge, NJ

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John Warren, Newburgh, NY

Joyce Williams, Bella Vista, AR

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Coming Events...

July 26 & 27 - MISSOURI

Metropolitan St. Louis

African Violet Council

Annual Show/Sale

Missouri Botanical Garden

4344 Shaw Blvd., St. Louis, MO.

Both Days: 9am - 5pm

Info: Linda Sumski

caribbeandreamer@att.net



New Plants from Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses

Photo Credit: Paul Sorano



Sister's Secrets - Standard



Fairy Castle - Chimera



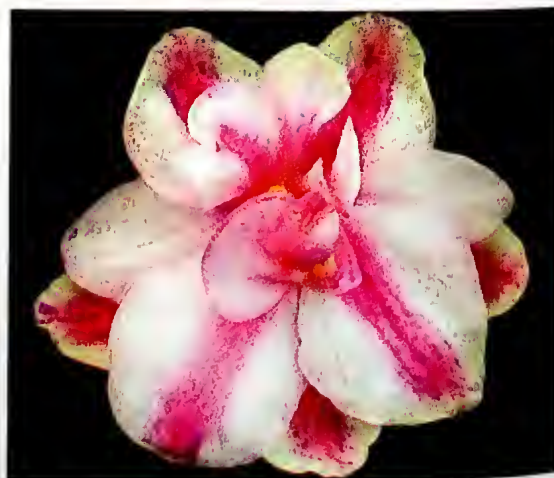
Hot Wired - Chimera



Destiny - Chimera



Moon Child - Chimera



Delta Dawn - Chimera

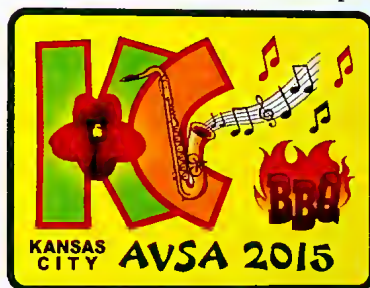
“Going to Kansas City, Kansas City Here I Come” ... for the 2015 AVSA Convention

Start making plans now for the 69th annual AVSA Convention to be held May 24-31 in Kansas City, Missouri. That's KCMO! Join us as we celebrate “Violets Love Jazz, Blues, and Barbecue” at the conveniently located Airport Holiday Inn and the adjacent KCI Expo Center.

Come explore a beautiful city with history, culture (*think Jazz and Blues*), great food (*think Barbecue, mmm...*) and a plethora of things to see and do. With 35,000 square feet of space in the expo center, there will be plenty of room for convention activities, the always-magnificent show, and the much-anticipated sales area where vendors from around the country will offer African violets and gesneriads new and old.

Members of the Missouri Valley African Violet Council are making preparations and are waiting to welcome you to the middle of American and the rolling green hills of western Missouri. Near Kansas City International Airport, the hotel provides free shuttle service to and from the air terminal, and within a few short miles are many restaurants and shopping opportunities. For those driving and bringing plants, there is ample free parking and easy access to the Show and Sales area.

Check upcoming issues of the *African Violet Magazine* for more information on tours and presentations, dining and shopping, and all the other fun things that will make Convention week 2015 the best week of the year!



Sierra Sunrise

Exhibited by:

Diane Kaluhiokalani

Hybridized by:

P. Sorano/L. Lyons Greenhouses

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

African Violet Society of America Nashville Show Winners

"Violet Pickin' in Tennessee"

Best African Violet in Show & Best Species

S. 5f clone orbicularis var. purpurea

Won by: Sandy Skalski from Mullica Hill, NJ

2nd Best African Violet in Show &

Best Standard

EK-Goluboglazaia Rossiia

Won by: Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN

3rd Best African Violet in Show & Best Trailer

Rob's Boolaroo

Won by: Ben Haning from Allen, TX

Best Semiminiature African Violet

Jersey Sugar Plums

Won by: Debbie McInnis of Floyds Knobs, IN

Best Miniature African Violet

Precious Red

Won by: Debbie McInnis of Floyds Knobs, IN

Best Standard AVSA Collection

Lady Baltimore, Buckeye Too Much,

Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler

Won by: Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN

2nd Best Standard AVSA Collection

Buckeye Cherry Topping, Buckeye Colossal,

Buckeye Everlasting

Won by: Sandy Skalski from Mullica Hill, NJ

Best Mini/SM AVSA Collection

Rob's Boolaroo, Rob's Vanilla Trail,

Milky Way Trail

Won by: Ben Haning from Allen, TX

2nd Best Mini/SM AVSA Collection

Precious Red, Jolly Orchid, Shirl's Hawaiian Lei

Won by: Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN

Best AVSA Species Collection

S. 5b clone confusa Mather E,

S. 5h clone velutina, S. 5b clone magungensis

Won by: Ben Haning from Allen, TX

2nd Best AVSA Species Collection

S. brevopilosa, S. 5b clone grotei Silvert,

S. 5g clone pendula var. kizarae

Won by: Susan Arnao from Mount Laurel, NJ

Best Holtkamp Collection – Amateur

Optimara Little Ruby, Optimara Little Pearl,

Optimara Rose Quartz

Won by: Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN

2nd Best Holtkamp Collection – Amateur

Optimara Little Aztec, Optimara Little Maya,

Optimara Little Arapahoe

Won by: Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN

3rd Best Holtkamp Collection – Amateur

Optimara Little Moonstone,

Optimara Rose Quartz, Optimara Little Pearl

Won by: Diane Miller from Anaheim, CA

Best Robinson Collection – *Rob's Plaid Skirt,*

Rob's Dodo Bird, Rob's Slap Happy

Won by: Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN

2nd Best Robinson Collection

Rob's Inner Orbit, Rob's Dodo Bird,

Rob's Combustible Pigeon

Won by: Ben Haning from Allen, TX

Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid Collection

EK-Laskovyi Mai, EK-Goluboglazaia Rossiia,

Ian-Minuet

Won by: Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN

2nd Best AVSA Registered Russian Hybrid

Collection – *Amour Elite, EK-Belaia Koroleva,*

LiK-Tanets Flamingo

Won by: Rodney Barnett from Red Lion, PA

Best Lyon's Collection – *Little Ebony, Sultan,*

Red Tiger

Won by: Ben Haning from Allen, TX

2nd Best Lyon's Collection

Heartbreak Kid, Spring Cardinal, Frosty Bubbles

Won by: Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN

Best Vintage African Violet

Amethyst

Won by: Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN

Best New Cultivar (Amateur)

K's Lilac Infusion

Won by: Kathy Hajner from Peralta, NM

Best Other Gesneriad

Nautilocalyx glandulifer

Won by: Susan Arnao from Mount Laurel, NJ

Horticulture Sweepstakes - 72 blue ribbons

Won by: Ben Haning from Allen, TX

Runner-Up Hort. Sweepstakes - 62 blue ribbons

Won by: Debbie McInnis from Floyds Knobs, IN

Commercial

Best African Violet in Show & Best New Cultivar
Hawaiian Cloud

Won by: Paul Sorano, Lyndon Lyon Greenhouse
from Dolgeville, NY

2nd Best African Violet in Show

Optimara EverSpecial

Won by: Steve Turner, Starz N Streps from
Southgate, MI

3rd Best African Violet in Show

Jolly Mi Mi

Won by: Jan Davidson, Jan's Workshop from Red
Oak, TX

Best African Violet on Display Table

RS-Vikont

Won by: Donna Brining, Fancy Bloomers from
Hammonton, NJ

Best AVSA Standard Collection

Singin' the Blues, Smooch Me, Wisdom

Won by: Kent Stork, Kent's Flowers from
Fremont, NE

2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection

Powwow, Ziina Ulybaetsia,

EK-Chernaia Zhemchuzhina

Won by: Donna Brining, Fancy Bloomers from
Hammonton, NJ

Best AVSA Mini/Semimini Collection

Jolly Orchid, Texas Space Dust, Cloud Puff

Won by: Jan Davidson, Jan's Workshop from Red
Oak, TX

Best Holtkamp Collection

Optimara myDream, Rhapsodie Rebecca,
Optimara EverGrace

Won by: Kent Stork, Kent's Flowers from
Fremont, NE

Best Other Gesneriad

Streptocarpus 'German'

Won by: Steve Turner, Starz N Streps from
Southgate, MI

2nd Best New Cultivar

High Expectations

Won by: Paul Sorano, Lyndon Lyon Greenhouse
from Dolgeville, NY

3rd Best New Cultivar

Donna's Mother's Love

Won by: Donna Brining, Fancy Bloomers from
Hammonton, NJ

Best Horticulture Showcase & Best Display Table

Won by: Donna Brining, Fancy Bloomers from
Hammonton, NJ

Best Artistic Showcase

Won by: Jan Davidson, Jan's Workshop from Red
Oak, TX

Horticulture Sweepstakes - 19 blue ribbons

Won by: Gary Dunlap from Hillsboro, MO

Runner-Up Sweepstakes - 11 blue ribbons

Won by: Donna Brining from Hammonton, NJ

Design

Best Design

"Dish Garden - < 12 inches"

Won by: Dolores Gibbs from San Marcos, TX

2nd Best Design

"Nashville"

Won by: B.J. Ohme, from Lincoln, NE

3rd Best Design

"Dollywood"

Won by: Ruth Goeke from Brenham, TX

Design Sweepstakes - 6 blues & 3 BIC

Won by: Mel Grice from Englewood, OH

Runner-Up Sweepstakes - 6 blues & 2 BIC

Won by: Karyn Cichocki from Lafayette, NJ



Photo Credit: S. Rosenzweig

Optimara 'Little Comanche'

Best in Show - Bay State AVS

Exhibited by: Sharon Rosenzweig

Hybridized by: Holtkamp

Semiminiature

Website News

Barbara Burde, AVSA Internet Committee Chairman
internet@avsa.org

The AVSA Internet Committee thanks all of you who responded to our online survey regarding the new AVSA website. Overall, about 80% of respondents were extremely or very positive about the website. Most of the responses were received before the photos were placed in the Photo Gallery; so the most common comment was that viewers wanted the photos.

Previously, adding the photos that were in the original Photo Gallery was a slow process, and we expected to have the same experience. However, our talented site administrator, Tom Glembocki, developed a procedure for quickly adding the photos to the new website. All the photos were online by the end of November.

Once those photos were on the website, we wanted to add more photos! Members are invited to submit their photos. Instructions can be reached from any Photo Gallery page.

One of our primary goals for this website was to make it easier for viewers to find the information they want. We feel that we have done this, but, unfortunately, in a website with as much information as ours, it becomes difficult to list all the contents while still keeping the menus simple.

To help with this, we have added a "Website Table of Contents", which lists the pages of the website, how they are grouped together, and the contents. In addition, there is still the search function on the home page.

Have you viewed the Donations page yet? You may conveniently make your donations to any of the traditional AVSA funds via the website shopping cart. Your contributions will continue to receive recognition in the Fund reports in the *African Violet Magazine*.

Hopefully, many of you have had the opportunity to use one or more of the online submission forms on the website. These forms are an easy way to submit your event information, show reports, or Best Varieties list.

Please remember to visit the website often to see what is in the News area, where we try to keep you advised of new things on the website and in AVSA.

If you have any suggestions or ideas for website improvements please share them with any member of the Internet Committee, or email them to internet@avsa.org.

AVSA – Building Maintenance Fund

Susan Hapner – Chairman • 35 Ridge Point Dr. – Chesterfield, MO 63017
Building Maintenance Fund 1 April 2014 to 15 May 2014



Two-tone

Carol Semrau
Donna Mosher



Thumbprint

Merle Schweineke
John Warren
Alice Inlow

Robert McMeel

John Patterson

Southern Colorado Violet Society

Irina Tsybul



Geneva

First Austin AVS

TOTALS \$213.00

2014 AVSA Society Awards

By Marge Savage, AVSA Awards Chair

REINHOLD HOLTKAMP, SR. BRONZE MEDAL AWARD

Single, violet-blue, two-tone/dark eye; medium green, plain, red back. AVSA #6602. So says the First Class description of the first African violet that I coaxed into living, *Optimara Trinidad*. How I love all the "island-named" varieties with their white edges!

Heading the third generation of his family business, Reinhold Holtkamp, Sr., decided in 1977 to expand the family's international operation to the United States. He founded the Hermann Holtkamp Greenhouses, Inc. in Nashville, Tennessee, which grew to be the world's largest producer of African violets supplying the entire North American market.

For over thirty years, Mr. Holtkamp, Sr., served as President and Director of Research and Development of the Optimara Group. He hybridized thousands of African violets during this period. Working with NASA in 1984, he sent some African violet seeds into space to encourage mutations, hoping that weightlessness and cosmic rays would bring new characteristics to the African violet world. He was right! We have all loved and benefitted from the Optimara EverFlora varieties.

Through the years, Mr. Holtkamp, Sr., supported AVSA with generous advertisements in the *African Violet Magazine* and provided our annual Show Awards with funding of Optimara's Best, Second Best, and Third Best Collections of African violets.

He saw to it that our conventions had countless gifts of plants, table favors, Optimara fertilizer packets, promotional gifts, bumper stickers, supplies, participation in Commercial Sales, and special private tours of the greenhouses. Help at every turn. Just to name a few.

We appreciate the family legacy given AVSA through his wife, Mrs. Gisela Holtkamp, and his son, Reinhold Holtkamp, Jr.

JOSEPH J. BRUNS BRONZE MEDAL AWARD

This person looks out at you from the pages of the *African Violet Magazine* as if to say, "I've got a little secret." WOW! And what a secret! But it didn't stay that way for long!

His achievements and contributions to the African violet world and to AVSA began decades ago, and continue to this day. It was back in the early 1980s that this couple visited a nursery in Arlington Heights, Illinois. She quickly became a recognized grower, while he lovingly helped her flourish in her hobby.

As members of the Barrington Bloomers and the Illinois African Violet Society, Jan showed the well-grown plants while Joe worked Classification. He was writing computer programs at the time and thought classification would be "a good thing for a computer program".

About 1997, Joe wrote the first version of First Class for Windows 3.1 and offered it to AVSA. It was a plant name and hybridizer search—not yet available to the public. The program gained instant acceptance, and we, being singular-minded people, wanted more. Joe stepped up to the plate and worked diligently to accommodate every request.

In September 2002, Joe introduced Version 2 of First Class. Today, the program prints labels, stores lists, shows pictures, organizes searches, updates information via the web—and features and manages over 17,000 African violet varieties.

Then... there's... Entries! If you have ever entered...participated... or viewed... an AVSA-sponsored show, you have benefitted from Joe's Entries program! Currently, Joe continues to work, update, improve, manufacture and service both these computer programs. The First Class and Entries Program: They are both valuable gifts to AVSA that have kept on giving!

The African Violet Society of America applauds and thanks Joseph J. Bruns for his gifts and awards him the Bronze Medal for **Scientific Effort**.

**CHRISTEL COLLIER
MABEL AND GLENN HUDSON
MEMORIAL AWARD**

Christel Collier is a rock! If you have seen the "app", First Class, you have encountered this person's work all over it! A skilled photographer, she generously has provided photos, not only for First Class, but for club newsletters, the AV CONNECTION and AVSA. An exemplary club member, she not only grows outstanding award-winning plants, but generously shares her cultivation knowledge, her plants, and her home for holiday gatherings.

A long-standing, active member of her club, Christel has served as President and Vice-President. She has presented educational programs ranging from growth and grooming, to pest/disease control. Christel quietly attends to details to effect smooth proceedings at meetings. She networks with the community for support of club programs and projects, scheduling, securing showroom space, and acquiring program speakers. She communicates with affiliated African violet club members throughout the region, serves as a Senior Judge, and frequently speaks by invitation.

Christel is active in the Dixie AVS and the African Violet Council of Florida, serving them as President and Treasurer. For those groups, as well as her own club, First Lakeland African Violet Society, she has served as Convention, Show, and Classification Chairs. And she has served on the Bylaws Committee of AVSA. In 1998, Christel participated in the then experimental soft-ware show set-up for Entries, a system now routinely used.

Of unassuming, gentle demeanor, Christel is "The Rock:" dependable, knowledgeable, always there—"the one to go to" for information, problem-solving, and support.

The African Violet Society of America values the dedication of Christel Collier and awards her the **Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial Award** for outstanding leadership activities within an affiliated chapter.

**CHERYL SALATINO
HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP**

Cheryl Salatino, with a huge smile and head laughingly tossed back, greeted you atop her regular column, "For Beginners" in AVSA's *African Violet Magazine*.

For several years, Cheryl wrote "For Beginners" and has recently "retired" from this work. She has been praised for offering information from which beginning growers could benefit. Cheryl is known for her easy-to-read and easy-to-understand style.

The African Violet Society of America appreciates this gift of skill and service and thanks Cheryl Salatino and awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.

**PENNY L. SMITH-KERKER, Ph. D.
HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP**

Penny quickly moved from very quiet observer into local and state showrooms as winner of many Bests in Show. Penny's club members are proud to call her "friend" and wish they had two more members just like her!

For AVSA, Penny organized, and produced a colorful, two-steppin', boot-scootin' shindig for the 2013 Austin Convention, "Violets Dance Across Texas." Although our Hill Country bluebonnets had "bloomed out" long before, she led her First Austin African Violet Society into peak performance as our Texas-size hosts.

To none other than the smiling Ph.D. at IBM, that teacher of Texas Talk, y'all, the African Violet Society of America tosses a thankful "Howdy" and recognizes Penny Smith-Kerker, Chair of the 2013 Convention and awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.

**SUSAN K. HILL
HONORARY ONE-YEAR MEMBERSHIP**

This lady from Austin, TX, drove off from Zilker Park in 2012 and moved to Kansas, Dorothy! But she had to come back to Texas to be Show Chair of our 2013 Austin Convention!

Now a Director of AVSA, Susan put her forty years of African violet experience to work and led her committee members to provide us with "Violets Dance Across Texas", a Show Room that was "Giant!," just like Texas, replete with blue bandannas bordering the Classes. The down-home focal point featured—not a purple ducky decked out in western duds—but burlap sacks and a very satisfying logo.

The African Violet Society of America thanks and says "Yee-Haw!" to the dedication and skill of Susan K. Hill and awards her the Honorary One-Year Membership.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

K's Lilac Infusion

Best New Cultivar (Amateur)

Exhibited and Hybridized by: Kathy Hajner

Violet Pickin' in Nashville

Showroom Photos by Neil Lipson



Get the Word Out!

Tips for Publicizing Your Show

By Maureen Pratt

maurpratt@aol.com • www.maureenpratt.com

You're almost there! Everyone in your club has worked hard, nurtured and prepped beautiful plants, and put the finishing touches on annual show and sale details.

Now, how do you get people to come? Friends and family undoubtedly know about the event already; it's no secret with them that you're working toward "the big event" (and, in fact, you might have enlisted their help!) Flyers cast a wider net at work, church, and other public places where your members have contacts.

But, what about "the media?" Have you reached out to print, web, radio and television outlets? Or, have past efforts yielded so little that you've given up on getting press?

I'm relatively new to showing AVs, but not new to working in and with the media. I've been a journalist and author for more than 20 years, have "guested" on radio and television shows such as the Hallmark Channel's "New Morning," and have even had my own television show that was satellite fed to more than 150 countries for more than a year. Last fall, I volunteered to handle publicity for my club's annual show and sale, and was able to use my journalism experience to "cast a wider net." The results were encouraging, setting a good stage for this year. Here are some tips for publicizing your show:

(NOTE: None of these tips should cost your club any money besides, perhaps, the printing of flyers; I don't recommend paying to publicize your event because there are usually enough free outlets in any give area.)

Lay the groundwork. Start planning your publicity campaign as soon as your club has set the date for your show. Before you can reach out to media, you have to know what outlets exist in your area. What daily, weekly, and monthly print newspapers circulate nearby? Which radio and television stations are local and which are national affiliates?

Who in your club has a website, Facebook and Twitter account, or other internet exposure? What garden clubs are in your area, and how can you reach them? (This was particularly successful for us last year.)

Write a press release, event blurb, and a pitch – and make sure the information is all correct and properly spelled.

The press release is a one-page news announcement that should include: What your event is (show/sale, theme, size of event), when and where it will take place, and information on parking, entrance fees, or other details. Include at least one person's contact information, including cell phone and email. Also include significant or unique facts such as whether it's the 50th show (for example) or any other special information. (I'm happy to send you the press release I wrote for our show if you'd like to use it as a template – email me at maurpratt@aol.com.) Use enthusiastic but professional language, and be as lengthy as you need to be, no more (editors get hundreds of press releases a year and don't have much time to read them).

The event blurb is the two-sentence write-up that will be included in a media outlet's ongoing list of community events. No embellishment, here – just the facts (who, what, when, where, and contact info).

Your pitch should be a distilled version of your press release and will be used when you call media outlets about possibly writing or airing a news feature about the show. Aim for three sentences that describe your event and why the editor would be interested in covering it for their paper/station. Practice your pitch until you feel secure and sound natural, enthusiastic, and clear.

Set a schedule. When you've identified the media outlets and have your press release and pitch, contact the outlets to find out what their deadlines are for 1) printing notices about your event, and 2) pos-

sibly featuring your event in a news/special interest story. ALL MEDIA OUTLETS HAVE DEADLINES AND IF YOU MISS THE DEADLINE, YOU'LL MISS OUT ON GETTING YOUR EVENT PUBLICIZED THERE! (Apologies for the all-caps, but deadlines are serious business in the media, and there isn't a grace period, especially for the daily and weekly pubs.) Also, remember that garden clubs' newsletters have deadlines, too, so don't wait until the last minute to send them information.

Develop a master calendar and mark all deadlines on it so you can see your timeline for publicity. Next, send in your press release and pitch your story – IN ADVANCE OF OUTLET'S DEADLINES. For monthly papers, work two months in advance, for weekly papers work a month in advance, and for daily papers (and local radio and television stations), work two to three weeks in advance (unless the editors advise you otherwise). This allows the editors time to consider your information in light of the other news items/stories they have, and gives you time to follow up in case your story gets lost.

For the internet, time your postings and Tweets so that they run fairly close to the weekend of your event; a long lag time between posting and the event might mean no one will see (or remember) your info in time to attend.

Follow up. Close to the "drop dead deadline" of each outlet, politely and enthusiastically contact the editor to see if he or she will be able to cover your show. Offer to provide additional information, if they need it, and stress the community interest of your

show and AVs in general (the most popular houseplant in America). If you have a willing club member, even suggest that a reporter visit him or her in advance of the show to see and report on what it takes to prepare plants for show (great pictures and much interest can result from this).

Carry through. Publicity does not stop the day of the show! As people arrive and members circulate with the public, ask visitors how they learned about the show and/or what drew them to come. Encourage them to purchase a violet (though most people don't need encouraging once they see those beauties on display!) and come to a club meeting. Welcome them to "your house," and invite them to make it theirs, too.

After the show, do a "debriefing" with members about the anecdotes they collected from speaking with visitors. Tally up the number of people who came because of an article, listing, garden club newsletter, etc. Keep records for next year, especially the names of reporters and editors who were particularly helpful (send thank you notes, too), and clips of articles and listings.

Much like cultivating our cultivars, publicity is an ongoing, relationship-building activity, and the better media professionals get to know you and your group, the more likely it will be that you'll get coverage. With patience, diligence, and a positive approach, you can spread the word, grow your attendance, and provide encouraging and inspiring news for bad-news-saturated media outlets – a win-win situation, for sure!

New "Question Box" Columnist Announced

Beginning with the Sept/Oct 2014 AVM, **Bill Price** joins longtime "Question Box" columnist, **Sue Haffner**, in answering your questions. AVSA thanks our other longtime Question Box columnist, **Ralph Robinson**, for his many years of sharing his expertise and ideas with our members.



A Message from Bill Price

I am very pleased to now be one of the contributors to the Question Box column in the AVM! Please email me any question or growing issues you would like to see addressed, and I will do my best to answer them. Here is my email address: billprice@telus.net and remember...there's no such thing as a stupid question! I am looking forward to receiving your questions!

Thank you!

Bill Price



Photo Credit: S. Rosenzweig

Optimara 'Chico'

Exhibited by: Sharon Rosenzweig

Hybridized by: Holtkamp

Standard

HISTORY OF TERRARIUMS

By Claire O'Shea

I will begin by answering the question a lot of you are thinking: What have terrariums got to do with African violets? Actually, quite a lot. African violets and their cousins in the *Gesneriaceae* family require a constant and reasonably high humidity, moist (but not wet) soil, and air temperature of 15°C + (60° F +). These are exactly the conditions provided by terrarium culture so, in theory, our 'favorite houseplants should do very well indeed if installed in one, and it would seem that terrariums are tailor-made for their care.

Gardens of Adonis

One of the earliest recorded instances of plants being grown in sealed containers relates to the festival of Adonis, or *Adonia*, of the ancient Greek and Phoenician cultures around 500BC. Adonis, the slain lover of Aphrodite was mourned and his resurrection was celebrated by the womenfolk. Here, women would tend quick-growing plants such as wheat, barley, lettuce, and fennel in earthenware pots, baskets, or small glass bottles during the eight-day festival. On the last day, these 'Gardens of Adonis,' with the now-fading plants were cast into rivers, streams, and the Aegean Sea together with images of Adonis to celebrate the cycle of the seasons and the death to life to death again of Adonis.

A Failure and an Exciting Discovery

No real evidence of the raising of plants in sealed environments was recorded again until the early nineteenth century. A common hobby amongst Victorians was an interest in the natural world, many amassing huge collections of flora and fauna, which have become the legacy of many museums. Ease of travel, exploration, and the ever-expanding British Empire helped to facilitate this. This was no different for a London surgeon, Dr Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward (1791-4 June 1868). He lived in Wellclose Square and wished to grow many of the ferns native to this area of London. He built up rockwork in the yard at the back of his

house and placed a perforated pipe on top through which water trickled down. The wall was planted with several species of "ferns and mosses procured from woods in the neighborhood of London, together with roses and wood sorrel."

"However, surrounded by numerous manufactories and enveloped in their smoke my plants soon began to decline and ultimately perish. All my endeavors to keep them alive were proving fruitless." Ward concluded that the poisonous London air was too toxic for the fragile ferns. Disheartened, he abandoned this project. During the summer of 1829 his attention turned to a study of the sphinx moth. He buried a chrysalis in some moist leaf mold in a wide-mouthed bottle sealed with a metal lid. As he observed the chrysalis, he noted that "during the day the moisture in the bottle condensed on the internal walls and returned from whence it came; thus always keeping the mold in the same degree of humidity. About a week prior to the final change of the insect, a seedling fern and a grass made their appearance on the surface of the mold."

He was astounded to discover that the fern was one of the very ones he had struggled to grow.

Ward decided to continue his experiment, and placed the bottle outside the window of his north-facing study. To his "delight the plants continued to grow well." He reported that the plants required no attention; no water was given nor the tin lid removed. The water continued to cycle within the bottle. One produced three to four fronds annually, and the other flowered once. This little garden continued growing for almost four years when the metal lid eventually rusted and rainwater was able to seep in and flood the bottle. Before this occurrence, however, Ward had procured other ferns and had 'fern cases' made to conduct further experiments. He concluded that for healthy growth, a plant required light, heat, moisture, a change of air, and an atmosphere free of soot.

The Wardian Case

Transportation of plants had always been difficult with a low survival rate. Plants were frequently packed in bog moss (*Sphagnum*). Deciduous trees and plants were packed at the end of their active season or in the driest sand for cacti and succulents. They were then lashed to the ship's deck as they could not survive the dark conditions of the hold. Plants did not fare well and often died due to too much or too little water being given (the water had to come from the ship's precious fresh water supply), salt spray from the sea, attack from rats and mice who nibbled the roots, and the climatic conditions experienced on deck. It was now time to attempt a daring experiment.

In June 1855, Ward filled two glass cases with ferns and grasses and sent them by ship to Sydney. Throughout the eight-month journey, the cases were lashed to the deck and exposed to all the extremes of weather. No attention was given to the cases, and all of the plants survived. For the return journey, commencing in February 1854, the cases were filled this time with Australian ferns and grasses. Temperatures of 32°- 38°C (90-100°F) were recorded at this time, then -7°C (20°F) at Cape Horn with a foot of snow on the ship's deck, 38°C (100°F) at Rio de Janeiro, 49°C (120°F) at the equator, and finally, eight months later in November, arriving in the British Channel in 4°C (40°F) temperatures. Again, the cases weathered all of this admirably and the plants survived to the delight of all. Ward published his findings in 1842 in a study entitled "*On the Growth of Plants in Closely Glazed Cases*." He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1852.

It was not long before these "Wardian" cases, as they became known, became an important tool in the transportation of plants. The Indian tea industry was born when 20,000 young tea plants were shipped to the Himalayas from Shanghai. Banana trees were sent from China to the Samoan and Fijian Islands. Rubber trees were conveyed from Brazil to Ceylon. Wardian cases were employed in the shipping of flowering plants and ferns between Europe and America, and it was reported that one London nursery used over 500 Wardian cases in a seven-year period.

The Royal Botanical Gardens in England im-

ported more plants in fifteen years than in the previous 100. The British Empire, no doubt, profited hugely as lots of crops could now be grown in many of its own colonies and the price of produce we, today, take for granted would have been much reduced. For instance, tea, once a luxury only the rich could afford, was 614 pence per pound in 1690 and by 1850 was 54 pence per pound, a decline of 91%. Accordingly, consumption rose from 1.1 lbs per capita per annum in 1820 through 2.43 lbs in 1854-56 to 5.9 lbs in 1900.

With all these exotic plants now able to be imported, our Victorian hobbyists needed somewhere to keep them and, as it was the Victorian way for craftsmanship of anything from a boiler to an engine to be crafted as a thing of beauty, it was, of course, not surprising that the Wardian case became quite at home in the fashionable Victorian drawing room. Made of iron and glass, money was the only object. Why stop at a modest case when something resembling the Taj Mahal or the Brighton Pavilion with many glass panels, span or domed roof, and even heating compartments built into the base, was possible? Such cases were once described by a nineteenth century author as "elegant and pleasing additions to the most tasteful and elaborately furnished drawing room, some being extremely light and graceful and most beautifully finished, with delicate enamel and gilding".

Ward did have his detractors, and his Wardian cases were compared to other previous inventions such as the greenhouse. However, his experiments should still be considered extremely important. He died at St Leonards, Sussex, and is buried in an unmarked grave in West Norwood Cemetery.

Advances in domestic central heating and insulation spelt the end for the Wardian case, as it became possible to grow the delicate plants inside the home without the need for a case. Changing fashions also had their impact, and by the mid-1920s, interest in terrariums had waned. After the First World War, people wanted to move ahead, modernize, and forget the miseries of war. New inventions, labor-saving devices, and modes of transport meant a much faster, exciting life for many. It was the Jazz Age! Art Nouveau was out, Art Deco was on its way, and any references to Granny's draw-

ing room were emotionlessly swept away.

The Second Coming

Just as fashions saw terrariums fall from favor, fashions saw them come marching right back again. The 1970s was a wonderful time for trying new things; some would say a 'daggy' (untidy) time best forgotten as we all clomped about in our bell bottom pants and platform shoes, relaxed in our bean bags, crocheting tank tops, hats, bags and anything else that took our fancy. We decorated our walls with string and wire art, make shell and macramé hangers for our hanging baskets, and planted up terrariums.

Ecological and environmental concerns also came to the fore, and the terrarium once more came into its own. Growing tropical plants in a terrarium made us feel that we were doing our bit to save the rapidly diminishing rainforests. Indoor plants were in vogue. Supermarket and variety stores all had 'garden departments,' offering for sale 'indoor plants' which were largely native to tropical climes such as South America and Mexico. This was the time I first heard about Gesneriads such as *Achimenes*, *Episcia*, *Sinningia* and *Saint-paulia*: the humble African violet. My mother worked for one of the variety stores and frequently brought home 'indoor plants' such as Marantas, Philodendrons, and Pilea (Aluminium Plant). We had little idea how to look after any of these, apart from the small amount of information on the label and what we could find in gardening books. Many, unfortunately succumbed to death, some more swiftly than others.

Around this time, I bought a terrarium for my mother. It contained a *Fittonia*, a *Pepperomia*, and some Maidenhair fern. It survived very well. We neither killed it by kindness nor neglect, and I was hooked.

Terrariums (they were no longer referred to as Wardian Cases) also reflected the 1970s. While some resembled the graceful Victorian style, with many glass panels and lead-lighting (another craft that was resurrected), many were ultramodern in style, shape, and construction. Novelty led the way with lots of plastic, globe shapes and fun or unusual containers. Occasionally, they could be hung from a ceiling or affixed to a wall. Some were dual-

purpose, forming parts of lamps and coffee table bases. Bottle gardens were also popular and offered a challenge when replanting time came around. Terrariums reached heights of popularity never before realized. Unfortunately, not many of these survive today, either because the plastic components broke, or they were thrown away when considered to be out of fashion.

Success with our first terrarium led to my planting one for my grandmother who lived in the country. The plants did quite well; the same could not be said for the plastic cover, which clouded and perished through an over-enthusiastic use of fly-spray. My brother, who at the time worked at Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences, offered me a small aquarium they no longer wanted and this was eagerly filled with plants. With what I know now about terrariums, it is a pity I did not put more of our 'Dead Freds' into terrariums, as my Mum had read somewhere that house plants enjoy being put out in the fresh air occasionally, so if anything started to ail, she dutifully put it outside which probably finished it off. Perhaps we should have put them all into terrariums instead. Today, if I have a plant that I think needs a little extra nursing or might not survive the conditions in our home, I enclose it in a zip-lock bag, and they generally do much better as a result.

So we have seen that terrariums have been vessels for religious festivals, experiments, and plant conveyance. They played a very important part in the establishment of primary produce plantations around the world, became a talking point for 'showing-off' in our fashionable drawing room, the latest must-have decorating item for our ultra-cool lounge rooms and a way to do our bit for the environment. For the time being our history lesson ends here, but feel free to add to history by giving terrarium growing a try.

Terrariums come and go as any other fad, but for some of us, they will remain a much loved and used tool in our gardening endeavors.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia

2013 Best Articles in the African Violet Magazine

By Lynne Wilson, Publications Chairman

The following top five articles were voted on by your AVSA elected officers, Board of Directors, and Standing Committee Chairman. They are all worth a second look.

Number: 1

"How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bugs" by Dr. Bill Price is our number one favorite article of the year. It was printed in the July/August issue of the AVM on page 44.

One common theme found in all these articles is that the authors are willing to share their knowledge and joy of our hobby. The winner of this year's Best Article is the poster man in this endeavor. Bill shares cuttings and his talents as our "Auctioneer," describing himself as a *shameless beggar!* Bill is also a teacher, and in this case, an author.

In this article, Bill shares his experiences using biological pest control, or pest predators. These predators primarily deal with the control of thrips, fungus gnats, soil mealy bugs, various mites (broad, cyclamen, and spider) plus some other pests. We all thank Bill for elevating the world of African violets once again with his knowledge and experience.

Number: 2

"How To Best Protect African Violets from INSV and Other Viruses" by Ronn Nadeau, Phd, appeared in the Jan/Feb AVM on page 21. This article proposes a program for eliminating, not just controlling thrips and mites, in African violet grow houses with physical barriers and chemical barriers, along with vigilance and monitoring.

Various methods of chemical control are discussed. Ronn is an organic chemist in the field of herbicides, so he is able and knowledgeable to discuss each compound with its history, toxicity, and other characteristics.

Ronn advises on keeping good records and having an exacting spray schedule.

Number 3:

"Make Your AV Club Grow: Teach, Teach, Teach" was printed in the Nov/Dec issue on page 42. Pat Hancock is a frequent author of interest to all club members. Past recipient of the Silver Pen Award, Pat continues to share her expertise.

In this article Pat recommends having "teaching stations" scattered throughout the show. Various topics include: starting from a leaf, potting down a neck, restarting a crown, etc. Clubs could furnish start-up kits to new members. Project plants can be used as an educational tool by having new club members bring them to each meeting and then receiving instruction about baby leaves and repotting.

Pat has many more suggestions. This article is well worth reading again.

Number 4:

"Aren't Violets Fun?" by Ruth Goeke, was found in the May/June issue on page 54. Ruth acquired the African violet hobby forty years ago. Ruth is also a truthful grower. While knowing how to grow show plants, Ruth admits that her plants are not always treated in the most kindly manner. Life sometimes has other plans.

Ruth grows a wide variety of African violets, including lots of mini and semi-miniatures from Hortense and some from Rob. Standards in her collection are from Lyons, and she has a few Optimara, and some Russian hybrids. Rounding out her collection are *chiritas*, *episcias*, *sinningias*, *streps*, and a few *Aeschynanthus* and *Columnea*.

Ruth lists as the real benefit to this long association with African violets is life-long friendships. Just think of all those friends you now have because of a common interest in this favorite house-plant!

Number 5:

Appearing in the AVM, January issue on page ten was the article entitled *"Never Too Old"* by Ray "Sundown" Pittman. Ray is 95 years young and still writing wonderful articles as well as hy-

bridizing. Sundown started his African violet journey forty-five years ago. In this article, Ray talks about his longtime friend Darryl Hoover. Ray asked Darryl to send him some streps recently, and now he is hybridizing with one of these "Wow" from Poland. The hybrids developed from these will be carrying the name

Raydar's using Ray, for Sundown's middle name, and 'dar' for the first thee letters in Darryl's name. Ray states he needs to live a long time to see what these seeds produce. He also states "THE MORE YOU GIVE, THE MORE YOU GET." Through friendship, all of this happened.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Del's Spring Blush

Exhibited by: Peggy Mooney

Hybridized by: D. Setchell

Standard

What's the Problem with Tank Water?

By Ruth Coulson

From her E-newsletter *The African Violet Way*

This question is my own, and here is its probable solution. Always take care!

For some years, I have had occasional problems with my African violets. One suggestion was that the source of this lay in the water supply. I have always used tap water, but when this was brought to my attention, I was surprised to find that its pH (here) is around 8.5 - 8.8. That's pretty alkaline for African violets. There was also the suspicion that the chloramine now used in the water supply (to eliminate bacteria) might be damaging the plants.

After thinking about it all, we decided to install rainwater tanks, just for watering the African violets, the shade-house, and the gardens. The violets reacted very well and grew better than they had for some time. This improvement wasn't entirely caused by the different water. I always suspected that there was a fungal problem, and I think that my repeated and regular efforts with various fungicides had finally paid off. Still all was going well for some time. We were fortunate enough to get regular rain so the tank was mostly about full.

Then towards the end of last winter, the rain dried up. All we had were miserable sprinkles of a few millimetres every few weeks. The level in the tanks declined. For our show last November, I had quite a few African violets in preparation and thought that all was going well - until in early October the leaves started to grow upwards and became thick, rigid, and extremely strong. It was impossible to keep most of them in a flat shape for showing. Other plants not destined for show began to show the same effects. What was the cause?

At first I thought that it could have been the new dolomite I had been forced to purchase, having run out of a supply that I used in my potting mix for years and years. My previous supply

was very finely ground and worked well and evenly. The new dolomite was (is!) rather coarse and uneven. It is rather unpredictable in use. I was thinking of trying again to find better dolomite, when another possibility came to my attention.

I noticed one day that the water I was using was the color of tea. Perhaps this was the cause. I suspect now that the discoloration was the final manifestation in a longish process. Earlier, the water was probably tainted but just didn't show discoloration.

We finally decided that the reason it was discolored was that the dry spell made the gum trees that surround our house flower much heavier than usual. The falling gum blossom is fine enough to sift through the guard on our gutters, and the tiny amounts of rain we had were too insignificant to even run to the by-pass, but just kept the gum blossom debris wet enough to leach out every chemical it contained. Eventually when it did rain, there was enough polluted water to overflow the by-pass into the tank - and then: gum blossom tea!

I have no idea what the actual changes within the plants were and no way realistically to find out. I leached many of the plants with tap water, and all were watered with tap water from early December on. The change has been marked. Some few plants were so badly affected I discarded them. With the others, I have now been able to remove the older distorted leaves, and after a quick bit of repotting, they are doing well.

This isn't scientific, but the plants are now recovering. Now we need to have someone come in to clean out the gutters and rainwater tanks.

So be warned - you probably don't have a house surrounded by gum trees, but the lesson is that as soon as you think everything is going well, problems jump up to bite you.

REJUVENATION IS POSSIBLE

By Sue Gardner

I can't help you grow younger – but I can offer some suggestions to help your African violets become fresh and healthy once more! Do your plants have any of the problems listed below? If so, try the suggestions given.

Before you start, check the foliage for pests or disease. If you find any, deal with that first. When re-potting, remember to use a pot that is just a little larger than the rootball.

1. Long Scrawny Neck

Remove the plant from the pot and check the rootball to ensure the roots are healthy and free of pests. Carefully scrape the stem of the plant to remove old leaf stubs. Don't scrape too hard – just remove the stubs. It is best to remove some of the old potting mix.

You need to assess whether the plant will sit at the correct level in its new pot. If not, you will need to remove some of the rootball. You can work out where to cut by placing the plant on a bench next to the pot. You now need to cut off the section of rootball with a sharp knife.

Place the plant in its new pot, then paint the scraped section of stem with rooting powder or gel. Fill the pot with fresh potting mix. Water sparingly. Allow the plant to adjust for a few days before placing on a wick watering reservoir.

2. Dirty, Dusty or Droopy

If your plant is droopy, it may be dry. If so, water a little at a time until it perks up. The rootball may be diseased or contain soil mealybugs. If this is the case, take a crown cutting as discussed in section 5.

If your plant has been neglected for a while, it will have accumulated dust and dirt on the foliage and probably needs a good cleaning. Brush the leaves free of dust with a soft paintbrush. If necessary, wash the foliage under gentle running tepid water. You will need to cover the potting mix

with plastic to prevent it from becoming waterlogged.

3. Old, Sad Leaves

If your plant has old, sad-looking leaves, check the root ball for mealy bug or rot. If the roots are healthy, the old leaves are best removed. This will no doubt leave the plant with a neck! Re-pot it as discussed above.

4. Pale and Uninteresting

This problem is usually caused by old potting mix that needs replacing. The pH of the mix is probably acidic if you have not re-potted for some time. Remove any yellow outside leaves and re-pot as discussed above. Make sure to remove as much of the old potting mix as you can.

5. Multicrowned

If you have been naughty and not removed side shoots as they form, your plant will have grown several crowns!

Carefully remove each side shoot, leaving the central crown. Each of these side shoots can be planted. The original plant will no doubt look bad, but if you remove most of the outside leaves, you can pot it down as discussed in section 1. If the neck is too long, you need to take a **crown cutting**. If you are too scared to take a crown cutting, you can allow new roots to grow from the stem as follows.

Build up the potting mix to cover the scraped stem. The potting mix can be held in place with a piece of plastic. When roots have grown from the bare stem, you can then remove the lower rootball, leaving the new root system.

If you follow the above suggestions, your plant will become young and vibrant again.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia

Transporting Plants to a Show: The Glue-a-Pot Method

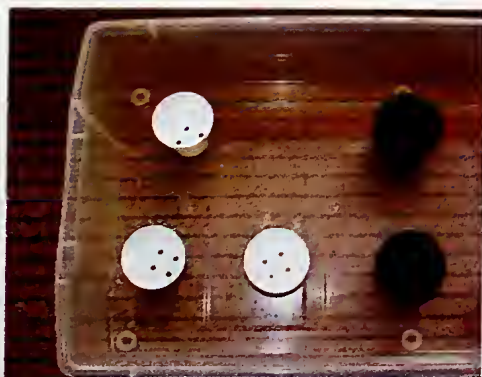
by Neil Lipson

When I started growing my plants for show eight years ago, I had a lot of problems getting my plants to the show in one piece. The experts showed me how to do it with shredded paper and other ideas. It was a lot of work. However, the engineer in me kicked in, and I think I found an easier way. Many of my friends to whom I've explained my method convinced me to write an article on it, so here it is.



Prepared for travel

I first started with the "under the bed" flat plastic carriers, as this allowed the greatest number of plants to fit in with the most flexibility for location of the pot. I then waited until the day before the show when I chose the plants that would be entered – and placed them one by one into the large container. Making sure that the leaves of each plant didn't disturb the plant next to it, I got about 8 to 10 plants into each tray, since I grew mostly standards. If I had semi-minis or minis, I could have doubled that amount. I marked the location of each pot on the plastic carrier with a black sharpie.



Pots glued in place

Then I took the plant and dropped it into a slip-pot. Next I used a glue gun and applied the hot glue to the bottom of the slip-pot, squirting some glue onto four corners of the pot – but not more than necessary. The glue hardens very quickly. Then, while the glue was still hot, I placed the slip-pot into the tray. Now I was able to move the plants with ease without worrying about damage.

The remainder of the plants can be done one by one until the tray is full. I typically enter as many plants as I can, sometimes 30 or more, and I can fit a few of these trays in my car. Driving plants to any show can be dicey, but if you live relatively close, this method works quite well. For long distance traveling, you may have to put something under the leaves, whether it be a foam rubber ring or another material, but this is a fast and reliable method to keep the plants from moving around.

Now, you may be asking, what do you do for the shows a year later? You'll find that this arrangement can work year after year. However, if the same layout doesn't quite work, the slip-pot can be pulled off and relocated. When applying the glue, you want to use enough glue to hold the pot in place, but not so much glue that pots cannot be removed.

There are some variations that provide greater flexibility and allow you to squeeze in more plants. You can raise some of the pots with a block of wood by gluing the wood to the bottom of the tray and then gluing the slip-pot to that. Sometimes I'll stuff a paper towel or piece of newspaper into the bottom of the slip-pot to elevate it enough that it doesn't touch the plants next to it.

I know there are other large plastic "trays" that have lids and, for me, the ideal one would be the bed trays, but with a taller height. If anyone knows who makes these, please drop me an email so I can refine this method some more. A higher tray would make it easier to cover the plants and insert taller ones.

While this method works quite well, I'm always open to new and better ideas, and I welcome hearing from anyone who has an improvement on it. If I receive enough ideas, I will write a follow-up article describing the methods and give people credit for their submissions. I would also urge others to write their own articles and to submit them to AVM for publication. I know that the readers out there are always looking for better ideas pertaining to African violets, whether it is growing, transport-

ing, or any other facet of this wonderful hobby.

I would like to thank Jeannie Myers for editing and to Paula Bal for her suggestion in doing this article.

Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant. He can be reached by emailing him at ndlipson@gmail.com or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. He will return your call.

AVSA SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

By Dr. Charles Ramser, PhD
Scholarship Committee Chairman

The AVSA College Scholarship for 2014-2015 has been awarded to **Victoria Turbyfill**, a Plant Genetics major and Entrepreneurship minor at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The award is most appropriate as Victoria states in her application,

"...This scholarship will be uniquely meaningful to me from this organization because African violets were one of the first plants that led me to my career in Plant Science. In my first year of college, I was obsessed with African violets and had about fifteen or so in my windowsill.... If it weren't for the African violets, I may have never

found my passion and talent for plant breeding."

Victoria plans to apply to graduate school next year to continue her studies and broaden her knowledge of plant breeding. For her doctoral degree, she intends to focus on plant genetics. Highly recommended by her faculty, Ms. Turbyfill has a GPA of 3.74 out of 4.0, has been on the Dean's List throughout her college studies, and is Vice President of the UF Horticulture Club. In her "spare" time, she is a road cycling and mountain biking racer. She promises one day to have her doctorate, be a leader in crop breeding, and help solve the growing population problem.

The Name Game

By Joe Bruns, AVSA Registration Chairman

It is almost impossible to accurately identify an African violet that doesn't have a name tag or other type of identification (a NOID, or a plant with no ID). The African Violet Master List of Species and Cultivars (AVML) and the First Class computer program list more than 16,000 different named African violets and their descriptions. Depending on your NOID, you could find a few dozen that match the characteristics. You might even be able to narrow it down to four or five. But then you would need to choose one of them, and it would be highly unlikely that you would choose

the correct name. Besides that, the AVML has less than half of the named African violets. Even if you found a photo that matched your plant exactly, the odds are great that it is not your plant. So many African violets look the same, and they all grow differently under different growing conditions. It is definitely a mistake to try to identify a NOID in this manner. There are already far too many misidentified African violets out there now. (Just ask anyone who has done classification and entries at an African violet show.) Please don't add to the problem.

Record Keeping, Is It Important?

By Sylvia A. Farnum, PhD
safarnum@aol.com

Maybe you say, "I only have 6 (60?) violets; I know what they are. So, why should I bother keeping records?"

If there is one thing I have learned in the fifty-four years I have been growing African violets, it is that our hobby of growing plants, GROWS. Growing African violets is not like collecting items that never change. Our hobby is ever-changing, expanding as new varieties of violets become available. Very few of us grow the same violets we started growing when we became hobbyists. As our hobby expands, we tend to forget our old plants and concentrate on what we grow now. But, I predict that a time will come when you will start to think about your history in the hobby and wonder about the plants you have left behind.

Then, there are the everyday challenges of keeping track of your present collection. All of a sudden, you may find that you have twelve plants of 'Melodie Kimi' and no plants of 'Optimara Everglory' to be found. Or, you will attend a sales event and come home with three plants that you already grow. It happens to all of us.

Making a List

So, why not simply make a list of the plants you grow? Many of us do just that.

What is the easiest and best way to keep track of a collection? Fifty years ago, I converted a box of calling cards to a record box, writing the information about each plant on a card and filing them alphabetically. Today, that is no longer necessary. In my opinion, the lovingly prepared and maintained First Class 2 database is the most impressive improvement in African violet record keeping.

Joe Bruns can never be thanked often enough for his efforts setting up this tool for the AVSA and maintaining it.

The First Class 2 database is so versatile, that it may be the only tool you need to keep records. It has a listing of over 17,500 violets, with all of

the information about each one, the name, the hybridizer, the date registered and the registration number, if the plant is registered, the type of plant, the description, photos, and a space for our own notes about the plant. It is the official registration tool for hybridizers.

In First Class 2, you can name and save your lists in a number of ways. Copy a list or single description to the clipboard, paste it into an email; you can save it as a text file, or a tab delimited file for use in a spread sheet. Importantly, you can also enter your own database of plants that are not in First Class 2. That could include older varieties that have not been documented in First Class 2, your own hybrids, sports, or NOID plants that you are growing. You can add your own photos to any of the First Class 2 files and to your own database files.



Example of Print Preview in First Class 2

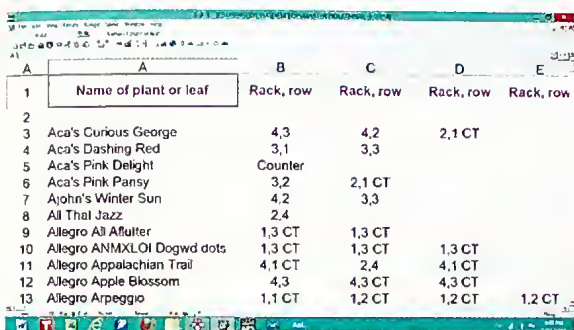
Using the First Class 2 Database

I use First Class 2 in a number of ways. I keep a primary list of all of the varieties that I grow on First Class 2. I don't like to use my laptop in my plant room, so I print a copy of my primary list and keep it in a three ring binder on my violet worktable.

I have another use for the list on First Class 2 of each plant that I grow. I save a copy of that list, with the names of the plants only from First Class

2, to a spreadsheet. Then, using the columns of the spreadsheet, I enter the location of each pot. I print a copy of the sheet and place it in my worktable binder for use as I work on my plants. I can see at a glance how many pots of each variety I have and where they are located on my racks. Some people add cultural data, progress reports, and other information to their spreadsheets. I grow too many plants to keep track of every day growing information. I do have potting notebooks that I can consult to find more, and I write the potting date on my pot labels.

I like to use a spreadsheet, because all of the functions of the spread sheet are available for use with my list. I like to be able to have the sheet tally the number of varieties I have, and the number of pots that I have on my racks. There are other features that come in handy.



A	B	C	D	E
1	Name of plant or leaf	Rack, row	Rack, row	Rack, row
2				
3	Aca's Curious George	4,3	4,2	2,1 CT
4	Aca's Dashing Red	3,1	3,3	
5	Aca's Pink Delight	Counter		
6	Aca's Pink Pansy	3,2	2,1 CT	
7	Ajohn's Winter Sun	4,2	3,3	
8	All Thai Jazz	2,4		
9	Allegro All Affluter	1,3 CT	1,3 CT	
10	Allegro ANMXLOI Dogwd dots	1,3 CT	1,3 CT	1,3 CT
11	Allegro Appalachian Trail	4,1 CT	2,4	4,1 CT
12	Allegro Apple Blossom	4,3	4,3 CT	4,3 CT
13	Allegro Arpeggio	1,1 CT	1,2 CT	1,2 CT

Example of Spreadsheet made with Data from First Class 2

I keep lists of plants I have purchased or received from friends, plants or leaves I have given away, even wish lists, on First Class 2.

A List to Use On The Go

Record keeping is so easy with First Class 2. The only thing that is missing, at least as far as I know, there is no app for smart phones. It would be handy to have your list on your cell phone to use when shopping at shows and sales, or in sales rooms. But, it is not necessary to have an app. If I think I will need to refer to my list, I simply go to First Class 2, bring up my master violet list, select names, hybridizer and registration number, and copy the list to the clipboard. Then, I paste it into an email, send it to myself, and there it is, in my mail on my phone. I can consult it any time. It will eventually slide down in my

email list, so I can mail a fresh copy periodically. It is so easy and so handy.

What About Photos?

Sometimes people complain about the absence of photos of some plants in the database. That is our responsibility as AVSA member growers. If we grow a plant that is firmly identified, whose photo is not in the First Class 2 database, send a photo to Joe Bruns. He will add it to the next update. Of course, you can add it to your version of the database any time.

Should I Make a Life List of African Violets?

Now, we come to the final question. Is it worthwhile to keep a Life List? I know that some growers keep photos of their formerly grown plants on various photo servers online. A Life List is a list of all of the African violet varieties that you have grown.

It is very easy to construct a violet Life List using the First Class 2 data base. If you started growing violets recently, since First Class 2 was available, all you have to do, is take all of your old lists, and merge them into one list. Then, it is easy to delete the duplicates and you will have a list of all of the varieties you have grown.

In my case, where I have grown violets for many years before the database was available, I had a larger task. I had the calling card file from the 1960s, and a number of bound notebooks for the years in between. In each bound notebook, I had listed the plants that I grew. I made new notebook lists about every two years. So, I went through those notebooks and made lists on First Class 2. I decided to make several lists for the various time periods, then, merge them into a Life List. I did that, but I still found that I missed some plants. One of the things that I did to try to include more of the plants I grew, was to go through the old African Violet Magazines and catalogs. I had notes written in many of them that I could check against my Life List. It is, and will be, a work in progress. Finding and adding photos to the list is not as easy, but when I have the time, I work on it. I think it is fun, and sometimes people ask about a variety. If it is on my Life List, with my notes, it is fun to remember the plants.

Internet and eBay Shopping Etiquette

By Pat & Jack Wilson

Many of us now routinely shop on the Internet for our African violets. The most popular venue is eBay. These are just a few reminders on Internet etiquette to help make your shopping experience pleasant for you.

DO:

1. Read the listing completely.
2. Pay your seller promptly, via his/her requested method - check, money order, PayPal, etc.
3. Provide a correct address. Be sure that the address shown on eBay and PayPal are correct and current.
4. Leave feedback; hopefully it will be positive.
5. Before you leave neutral or negative feedback, reach out to the seller directly in an attempt to resolve the problem.
6. If you have a problem, many sellers provide a contact email in the items you receive to allow you to contact them directly. (A little insider information here: *If you go through eBay, your seller receives a Resolution Case on them. This means that even a simple question such as "will the color of the blossom vary?" will be registered as a defect against the seller. eBay uses "defects" to penalize sellers. A seller will be charged higher fees or can even lose their seller's privileges by receiving "defects."*)
7. Only use the Resolution Center if there is absolutely no other way to correct the problem.
8. If there is a postal delivery delay or issue, check with your carrier and/or post office first. The seller has no way of knowing what the post office in your area is doing.

DON'T:

1. Don't ask to delay payment. eBay will hit you with a Nonpaying Buyer/Bidder strike after three days delay in payment. Many sellers are now blocking any buyers/bidders who have xx number of nonpaying strikes against them.
2. Don't ask to delay shipment. If you are unable to receive the item within 2-7 days after you pay for it, then wait to purchase until you can. If your seller holds your shipment for anything other than weather extremes, they are penalized with "defects" and lose money (higher fees) and possibly selling privileges.
3. When you communicate with your seller via email, remember that old adage, "Keep your words sweet, you may have to eat them." Always read and reread your emails, especially those in which you are complaining or expressing anger. Sellers have the option to block buyers for any reason the seller chooses.
4. Do not communicate with your seller when you are angry with anyone or anything. All of us tend to strike out at the person who is in our line of sight, even if it is on the Internet.
5. Don't use blogs or Internet groups to spread rumors or negative comments about sellers. The word gets out about this sort of thing and sellers may decide they do not want to do business with you before you ever walk through their Internet door. Trust me, a bad seller will fail due their own bad practices.
6. Most of this seems like common sense, but sometimes we all forget these guides of pleasant social interaction, especially with the anonymity of the Internet. 99.99% of the sellers on the Internet want your experience with them to be good. They want you back again and again. So, communicate with your seller as if you are looking them in the eye and treat them with the same courtesy and respect you expect for yourself.

GROWING IN NATURAL LIGHT

By Dorothy Bullen

When you find the best position in your house to produce flowering plants, you will have solved 90% of your problems. Light and warmth are the two main essentials needed when seeking the right spot. Other essentials are tepid water, fertilizer, and a light potting medium. Plants can be killed by over-watering and over-fertilizing.

Plants can be grown on windowsills or shelves close to the light source. Choose a window as free as possible from shading by bushes, trees, fences, or wide eaves. I have two stands in almost floor-to-ceiling windows, facing north. Each stand has four shelves, and each shelf will hold six kitty-litter trays lapping over each side. I made a nylon curtain, strung on elastic, and the height from which it is hung is adjustable. It protects the plants when the sun is in the north. I also use a venetian blind.

For the summer months of the year, I don't have to worry, as the sun's trajectory is so high that the eaves cut off direct sunlight. During autumn and spring, when the sun's trajectory is lower in the sky, great care has to be taken to protect the plants from the sun's rays.

The plants at the front, nearest the windows always come into flower first, so their position is

changed, usually when watering, in order to bring other plants forward. Remember to turn each pot or tray regularly, every time you water. This will encourage leaves to grow in a flat rosette.

In winter, draw curtains or blinds at night to prevent heat loss. Reduce or dilute fertilizer in winter if your growing area is cool. If your growing area is kept warm, fertilize as normal.

To flourish, plants need all available light. Clean windows can help. If you do not have windows with sufficient light, consider using fluorescent lights.

If plants are cold, their leaves will grow down to hug the pot. To avoid this problem as winter approaches, make a collar by cutting a hole in a paper plate, slip it up from under the pot to a little below the leaves and hold it in place with another pot. Do this when the plant is on the dry side to avoid leaf breakages.

Always water with tepid water. Not only will cold water damage the roots and cause markings on leaves, it also chills the potting mix. It takes many hours for the mix to return to room temperature.

From *The Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia

Humidity

By Joyce Stork

From the AVSA Website Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is the range of humidity the plant is used to and what temperature range? I am putting some in a vivarium, (*an enclosure for keeping animals under seminatural conditions, aquarium or terrarium*) with the humidity around 80-90% plus the amount of water needed. I mist once or twice a day.

Answer: If the humidity range is actually in the 80-90% range, you may not need to add

much water at all. African violets in nature commonly grow in a range of 30-60% humidity with temperatures ranging from the low 60's to the upper 70's Fahrenheit. At high humidity, fungus diseases are more likely to thrive, especially in an enclosed environment. I would suggest trying just one African violet in the vivarium to see how it does for a few months before you try more. Happy Growing! Joyce Stork



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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The Summer of 2013

By Peg Crawford

I've been growing violets for quite a long time, but something occurred this summer that really had me scratching my head!

Earlier in the year - after our annual spring show, of course! my plants looked good. Leaves had a good green color, violets were blooming, and even my episcias and streps seemed happy and healthy. Then, in July, here in Massachusetts, we experienced an early and prolonged summer heat wave. It was a spell of really intense heat and humidity, and it was after the first week of these very tropical conditions that I started seeing problems in the plant stands.

The first thing I noticed were leaves - mostly outer - on some African violets turning to mush. Well, that didn't seem very unusual, given the conditions in my old house. The violets are in a spare bedroom, and we don't have air conditioning, so once my house gets hot - it gets VERY hot. There is a window in that room, which I was keeping open with a small fan in the window to circulate the air.

A couple of days later, I went in the plant room to water and was dismayed to find that a few of those plants from which I had removed the brown mushy outer leaves had completely collapsed -with just about ALL of their leaves turning brown and limp. When I took a closer look at my other AV's I saw that almost all the plants were showing some signs of a problem. Many of the leaves were browning or had large brown patches on them, and they were not necessarily the outer leaves. The brown mushy patches were everywhere - some on outer leaves, some on middle leaves and some in the center!

I didn't think this problem was due to over-watering, because I hadn't been watering very much, given the humidity. However, at that point, I figured I might have some type of fungus problem, so I mixed up a solution of Physan 20 and started spraying all my plants. I did not see any other signs of a problem, such as didn't mealybugs, thrips, or even fungus gnats - just extensive

leaf damage.

Well, the heat wave finally broke after a couple of weeks, but by the time it did, something was running rampant through the plant room and killing all my plants. It seemed like every couple of days I was tossing some plants out or moving them to another room, hoping the collapsing would stop. Finally, out of desperation, I began seriously "cleaning house". Even my streps, episcias and a couple of other houseplants (a jade plant and a Greek oregano plant) started looking weird, so they all went in the trash too.

I am still not sure what happened. Was it simply the high heat and humidity that caused my plants to collapse and rot, seemingly overnight? I had something similar take place a few years earlier, during a very hot and humid patch, and I never figured out the cause of that scourge.

All I know is that once I made the decision to "clean house," everything went into the trash. Right now, I've got the plant stands cleaned up and disinfected and have already received one order of new plants. I'm planning on getting more this fall, putting down some leaves, and hopefully I will have a full and flourishing plant stand again this spring!

Ye Bay Stater Editor's Note: I emailed Dr. Jeff Smith, who writes the column "In Search of New Violets" for the *African Violet Magazine*. With his permission, his response below:

"Yes, the overall symptoms look like a fungal infection of some sort. Which specific fungus would take an expert plant pathologist to identify (Ag department at your state university). Botrytis is certainly a candidate, as well as one or two others.

Question - did this hit lots of plants all at the same time, or just one or two at first and then spread through the collection? The reason I ask is that if many plants were hit all about the same time the vector might be in the water or

watering equipment.

Fungal spores can be spread through the water and attack the roots, then move up into the petioles and crown of the plant. If these folks stored water in a rain barrel or other common source, it could be contaminated and spread through watering. Sterilizing the water storage units and watering equipment might be a way to help contain the infection.

The fungal spores could also have been in the soil. If a batch of plants were all repotted at the same time and then showed a mass infection, the soil might be the source of the fungus. Sterilizing the soil mix or throwing it away and getting new soil might be a way to contain the infection.

If only a few plants were hit at first, then it spread throughout the collections, then the source is probably from the air, a water drip in the growing area etc. and the fungus spread from plant to plant. Isolation techniques might help minimize the spread in this case.

I am not current on chemicals for fungal treatment. I'd recommend seeing an expert plant pathologist for an ID on the fungus and what chemicals are currently available for treatment. However, I would also anticipate that they'll also

recommend some sterilization of equipment, pots, soil, etc., as well as looking at water as a vector for contamination.

A second response from Dr Smith:

Since the "issue" came on pretty much all at once, I would worry about a contaminated water supply or watering can. I hope people at least think about "how" they are doing their watering and consider preventive measures. I know I worry about my RO water being stored in a 35 gallon trash can. I empty it totally at least once a month and scrub it out well before refilling. It's not my only water source (I do use fish water from my aquariums too mixed with the RO water) but it's the only water that sits long enough to encourage fungal growth.

I'm so sorry for these folks. It must be very frustrating. If you do get a positive ID on the fungus and recommendation for treatment from a pathologist, I'd be interested in hearing what they tell you.

From Ye Bay Stater, Publication of the Bay State AVS

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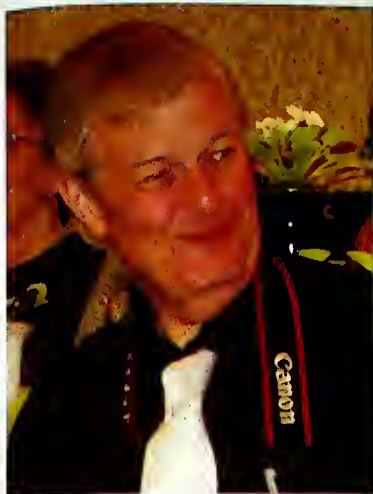


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Number 5



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African Violet

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Hawaiian Cloud

Best New Introduction

Exhibited by: **Paul Sorano**

Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By John T. Carter, President

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

I am looking forward to the fall shows. Check out the Coming Events in this magazine and on the AVSA website. You can make a nice weekend trip out of this type of event and possibly restock your violet shelves.

If you are part of the group hosting one of these shows, don't miss out on the opportunity to recruit new members, both for AVSA and your group. Having a membership table is nice and will share information, but a personal invitation, a greeting, and speaking with a person will be far more effective. Keep in mind if you are still using some of the old culture folders that you need to paste labels over the old prices. This would be a good time to tell them about our current membership promotion. *If you join or renew for two years, you will get an extra issue free.* This will be for a limited time so you can promote this to your affiliate members as well as potential new members. Keep this special offer in mind for those people on your gift list that are hard to buy for.

Positive comments are still coming in from the Nashville convention. The tours to the Holtkamp Greenhouses will be remembered and talked about for some time. The tour to the Grand Ole Opry was one of the things on my bucket list. I am not scratching it off yet since I want to see one of our Oklahoma performers on the stage. I have had a couple of convention problems reported to me. If you know of, or saw, a problem please let me know, so the problem can be directed to the appropriate



committee and corrective action taken before our Kansas City convention next year. With the number of people involved and the number of activities taking place, there will always be a few problems. We just work to make sure it does not become a problem to you.

You will find further information in this magazine concerning the Tinari Endowment Fund. With limited time and publicity, the challenge has already seen over one thousand dollars in donations. This means the fund will grow by over two thousand dollars. Thanks to those who have already donated. If you have not yet donated, today is a good day to make your donation.

The Nominating Committee never has an easy job. This year our members responded with applications and showed the willingness to see AVSA move ahead to the future. Multiple applications were received for most of the positions so the committee had choices to select from. This helps get representation from all areas of the country. If you submitted an application, thank you! If you are not selected this time, your application will stay on file and you will be a candidate for the next election if you still wish to do so.

I hope that you continue to find the *African Violet Magazine* informative. Don't forget to visit the website frequently to keep yourself current!

John



Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

Things have been pretty busy around the AVSA office for this time of year. As the clubs start gearing for their fall shows and displays, things pick up here.

It has been a normal Texas summer for us, our usual allotment of triple digit days and evening thunderstorms, just in time to cool things off a bit. Many evenings, every week, we have a "blue-Norther" come from...yep, north of us. The other evenings are nice and hot, and we have an interesting display of heat lightening. I am not complaining. I have a porch swing in my front yard, hanging off a branch of our huge old oak tree...the perfect place to watch heat lightening and listen to the crickets and cicadas.

Of course, the plants in my office don't really like the heat. The water reservoirs are filled more often, and the plants are moved away from the window. I actually have more



plants in this office than I have in years. Not that I intended to, but most of them were table favors at conventions, and a couple were gifts from friends. My favorite plant is, of course, my *Strep* 'Raydar's Ruthie,' a gift from the hybridizer, and my dear friend, **Ray Pittman**.

I am excited about the leaves I received from my Russian friend, **Dmitry Ozherelyev**. Little babies are up, in the plastic-lidded "salad containers" I use as little greenhouses. Every leaf I brought back from the Nashville Convention has babies up, and growing.

I want to encourage everyone to write for the AVM. Whether you are relatively new to African violets, or have years of experience, other growers are interested in what you know, and what you have learned. Also, submit your plant photos; at least 1 MB/300dpi.

Have a great September!

Ruth

TOURING HOLTkamp GREENHOUSES



Coming Events...

Sept. 13 & 14 — CALIFORNIA

Delta Gesneriad & AVS
Annual Judged Show and Sale
Sacramento Garden & Arts Center
3530 McKinley Blvd
Sacramento, CA
Sep 13 - 1pm - 4pm
Sep 14 - 11am - 3pm
Info: Lynn Lombard
550-637-9000
Email: lynn_lombard@att.net
URL: www.sacviolet.org

Sept. 19 & 20 - TEXAS

Metro-Trio AVS of Dallas Fall Sale
North Haven Gardens
7700 Northhaven Road, Dallas, TX
Both Days: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Info: Mary Corondan (972) 333-4748
Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com
Bill Foster (972) 279-5993
Email: 1bpfooster@sbcglobal.net

Sept. 26 & 27 - IOWA

Cedar Valley African Violet Club
Annual judged show/sale
CrossRoads Center
124 Crossroads Shopping Center
Waterloo, Iowa
Sept 26 - 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sept 27 - 10 a. m. to 4 p.m.
Contact: Carol Magoon
641-751-7751
cmagoon@heartofiowa.net

Oct. 4 - OKLAHOMA

African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa
Annual Fall Sale
Tulsa Garden Center
2435 S Peoria Ave
Tulsa, OK
Hours: 9am - 3 pm
Info: Nancy Moerer
nmoerer@cox.net

Oct. 4 & 5 - TEXAS

Spring Branch African Violet Club
Annual Fall Sale
Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center
2020 Hermann Drive
Houston, TX 77004
Oct 4 - 10am - 4pm

Oct 5 - 10am - 3pm
Info: Karla Ross 281-748-8417

Oct. 4 & 5 - MINNESOTA

North Star AV Council Twin Cities
Fall Show/Sale
Bachman's - 6010 Lyndale Ave.
Minneapolis, MN
Oct 4 - 9 am to 5 pm
Oct 5 - 11 am to 4 pm
Info: SteveGonzalez@live.com

Oct. 4 & 5 - CONNECTICUT

Nutmeg State Annual judged show/sale
Homewood Suites
6905 Main Street, Stratford, CT
Oct. 4 - 1pm - 4pm
Oct. 5 - 11am - 3pm
Info: Donna Presnell (203) 777-1872
Email: kjwross@yahoo.com

Oct. 11-12- WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Council of AV Clubs
Annual Show/Sale
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
3330 Atwood Ave.
Madison, WI 53704
Oct 11 - Noon-5pm
Oct 12 - 10am -3pm
info: Alice Peterson
Email: peters56@tds.net

Oct. 11 - Pennsylvania

AVS of Philadelphia
Annual Judged Show/Plant Sale
Cathedral Village Retirement Community
600 E. Cathedral Road
Philadelphia, PA 19128-1933
Oct 11 - Noon - 6PM
Admission Free
Info: Carol Hastings
(610) 272-6961
Email: sqcut2@aol.com
http:// www.phillyviolets.org

Oct. 18 - MICHIGAN

Michigan State AVS
Fall Display & Sale, African Violets,
Streps & other gesneriads
October 18 - 10am - 4pm
Matthaei Botanical Gardens
1800 Dixboro Rd
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Info: LynnAllen0413@comcast.net

Oct. 24 & 25 - MINNESOTA

AVS of Minnesota Fall Display/Sale
Northtown Mall
398 Northtown Drive N.E.,
Blaine, MN 55434
Oct 24 - 10am - 7pm
Oct 25 - 10am - 4pm
Info: Jude Neumann
http://sites.google.com/site/avsmi-
nesota

Oct. 24 & 25 - NEW YORK

New York State AVS
Annual Judged Show/Sale
Owego Treadway Inn
1100 State Rte 17C
Owego, NY 13827
Oct 24 - 1pm - 5pm
Oct 25 - 9am - 4pm
Info: heidisviolets@aol.com

Oct. 25 - OREGON

Portland AV and Mount Hood
Gesneriad Club Sale/ Display/
Education Table
Oct 25: 10am- 2pm
Tabor Heights Methodist Church
6161 SE Stark St
Portland, OR 97045
Info: 503-631-3925
Email: alicemaebblue@yahoo.com

Oct. 31 - Nov. 1 - TEXAS

Lone Star AV Council Show/Sale
Oct 31 - 2pm - 5pm
Nov 1 - 9am - 4pm
Southfork Hotel
N Central Expressway
Plano, TX 75074
www.lsavc.org or call 972-333-4748
Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

Nov. 1 & 2, 2014

AVC of Greater Kansas City
Annual Judged Show/Sale
Loose Park Garden Center
51st Street and Wornall
Kansas City, MO
Nov 1 - 9am-3pm
Nov 2 - 10am-3pm
Info: Fred & Pat Inbody
(816) 373-6915
E-Mail: kskd1@juno.com



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Optimara Little Arapahoe

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis

Hybridized by: Holtkamp

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

S. 5b clone magungensis

From the Best AVSA Species Collection

Exhibited by: Ben Haning

In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

One of the rewards of growing African violets is that there are so many different types of flowers, colors, and foliage. The original *Saint-paulia* species plants all had simple blue-purple flowers. After 100 years of mutations and selective breeding, growers now have a very wide palate of plant choices. Another thing about African violets that makes them "interesting" is the interaction between Nature and Nurture. Nature is the genetic background of the plant while Nurture is the culture used to grow the plant. Nature and Nurture often interact, sometimes in surprising ways. The same cultivar (Nature) can look very different in color and other characteristics depending on the culture (Nurture).

Sometimes it is difficult to tell if a new characteristic in African violets is the result of a change in Nature (genetic mutation) or a result of something in the Nurture (cultivation). Over a year ago, I received a nice message from a hybridizer who thought they might have a new trait in African violet flowers. The petals were distorted with "puffs" about a third out from the center. The hybridizer had contacted me about the probable inheritance pattern of this new trait.

Since the trait had appeared in several seedlings from the same cross, there was a possibility that this was a new genetic trait (Nature). However, getting the same mutation in several seedlings at the same time stretched the odds of probability a bit too much. New mutations are more likely in a single plant rather than several seedlings at once. Therefore, I suspected that the "puffs" were likely due to culture (Nurture). The question was how to tell if "puffs" were due to Nature or due to Nurture.

The hybridizer grew the original plants through several more flower cycles and put down



leaf cuttings. If "puffs" were due to genetics (Nature) the trait should continue in each successive bloom cycle and also show in the new plantlets. If "puffs" were due to culture (Nurture), having the plants bloom at different times of the year would likely change their expression and the trait might totally disappear.

The final result was that the "puffs" failed to reappear in later bloom cycles and in the new plantlets. This suggested that "puffs" was not a new genetic trait, but due to some disturbance in the hybridizer's cultural methods. The hybridizer was very disappointed, but at least they had evidence to support what was going on with this trait.

If you find something "new" in your plants, remember this battle in African violets between Nature (genetics) and Nurture (culture). Both give additional excitement to our hobby, but only Nature is going to allow the development of new types of plants.

Q: Since African violets are closely related to Streps and some Streps have scent, is there a possibility of getting a scented African violet?

A: Many years ago, I would have said this was very unlikely. However, given the DNA studies that have shown just how closely the two plants are related, the possibility of scent in African violets no longer seems as impossible as I once thought. Having hybridized for scent in Streps, I know that while this trait is elusive and difficult to work with, it is possible to get scented Streps, so why shouldn't we get scent in African violets too?

I have had individuals report to me from time to time that they have experienced a scented African violet. While I have never examined the plants in person, I'm always wondering if they

are getting a genetic effect (Nature) or if there is something cultural (Nurture) that explains the scent. Most plants reported to be scented seem to be best explained by cultural, but how would you know?

First, if you suspect you have a scented African violet, separate the flowers from the plant and place them in small container such as a baby food jar. Cover the jar with paper so the flowers can't be seen and set up an empty jar as a control. Now let all of your friends and neighbors do a blind sniff test of both jars. If most individuals detect or report a scent consistently for the jar with the flowers, then you might have a scented African violet. If the results are about 50% for each jar, then you probably don't have a scented flower. Be sure that all other variables between the two jars are equal and mix up the order of presenting the jars for the sniff test.

If the sniff test results seem to favor a new genetic mutation (Nature) rather than culture (Nurture) then try to propagate the plant as was described for the "puff" trait. If scent seems to carry through to the offspring, then perhaps we really will have found a scented African violet. If you do find a scented plant, there are plenty of people who will be waiting to grow it.

Q: I love the flower type of Lunar Lily and White Lunar Lily, but their foliage needs improving. Any suggestions on how to conserve the flower type while improving the foliage?

A: Additional e-mails with this individual also brought out their desire to have variegated foliage. It can be tricky to try to conserve one trait such as flower type while improving another such as foliage, but a little planning, patience, and luck should allow a hybridizer to reach their goal.

First, choose a plant that has the best behaved variegated foliage that you can find. You will want to use this plant as the seed parent. The variegated foliage should inherit through the seed parent and give you nearly 100% variegated seedlings. The foliage of the seedlings will likely vary, but hopefully some will conserve the shaping and growth patterns from the seed parent.

The flowers of Lunar Lily and White Lunar Lily are extreme cases of the wasp type flowers. Given the deep division of the petals, I suspect that the underlying flower shape may be the star shape rather than the pansy or violet shape. Star shaped flowers have equal sized petals which should give more even separations of the wasp trait in the petals. Pansy shaped flowers tend to have larger divisions between the petals in the lower three petals, but only minor divisions on the smaller upper two petals. If this assumption is correct, I think you'll have better success crossing onto a star shaped flower. This should maximize the separation of the petals and hopefully give you the flower shape you want.

If you don't get the combination of foliage and flowers to match your goal in the first generation, try taking several of the best F1 flowers and cross them together, or self-pollinate to get the F2 generation. This might help produce a combination of flowers and foliage closer to your goal. Good luck with your hybridizing.

Q: Why can't leaf chimera plants be propagated from leaf cuttings like other African violets?

A: Leaf chimera African violets are a strange combination of two tissue types. The epidermal or skin tissue has one genetic makeup and the mesophyll or center of the leaf has another genetic type. The two cell types must also be in the correct pattern or layers to each other to produce a leaf chimera. Leaf cuttings usually produce new plants only from the epidermal layer of cells. The mesophyll tissue is not used at all in producing a new plant. The resulting plant has only the one genetic cell type, not the two genetic types of the chimera parent. The only way to preserve both genetic types is through buds or products from buds which conserves the two types of cells and the correct layering pattern. This means that suckers, bloom stalk cuttings, or stem tip (crown) cuttings are your best bets. If you are familiar with how to reproduce chimera flowers (see the AVM May/June issue for articles) you can apply the same techniques to leaf chimeras.

The Violet Network

By Jennie Lawrence

Email: missjennae@yahoo.com

Optimara

It would be fair to say many people get their start with African violets because of Holtkamp Greenhouses. A chance encounter with a beautiful NoID on the shelf of a big box store hooks the customer. The chances are good that the trade name on the African violet is "Optimara."

Optimara is the registered trademark of Holtkamp Greenhouses, Inc. They are the world's largest grower of African violets. This company was started in 1904 in Germany. In 1977, Holtkamp Greenhouses opened in Nashville, TN, and introduced Optimara violets to the public. A simple Google search of the Optimara name brings up a fantastic website.

At first glance, it is obvious that customers' success with violets, and with use of the site, is very important to this company. There are numerous links on the main page. They help the customer do everything from identify an Optimara violet to troubleshoot problems.

The "Care" section covers all aspects of the subject. A novice violet owner would have no problem following the directions on this page. Just about any care question will be answered on this page, from water and light, to gas or chemical fumes in the air. There is also a Spanish-language option.

It is easy to get lost looking at the beautiful pictures presented in New Varieties and the Space Violets links. The former takes the viewer to links about the different series of violets. The latter gives a little history about the Space Violets and detailed care information. There are also other links to variety information and identification on the menu.

Catalogs are another option for exploration. They not only have these options for violets, but



for ferns, begonias, and much more. The array of different plants and products is astounding. These catalogs have a "flipping book" feature. One simply clicks at the top or bottom outer corner of a page, and the page turns. There are sound effects for added fun. One can also explore back issues of catalogs, too.

There are three strong educational features on this site. The first is a reading list. The depth of the publications listed is impressive. The suggestions range from this magazine to a link to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Glossary of Terms has multiple benefits. It introduces the user to horticultural terms. The glossary does not just describe or define the terminology, but it discusses the importance as well. There are numerous linked terms in the glossary. If a word in a definition is found in the glossary, one can click on it to find its definition as well.

Dr. Optimara is an invaluable resource. One begins by clicking on the picture of the part of the plant that is displaying a problem. The options are leaves, flowers, stems, crown, roots, or other. This takes the user to a problem list. Symptoms are listed multiple times. For example, Leaves - Brown, Shiny Spots is also listed as Leaves - Shiny Brown Spots. Clicking on the symptom then takes the user to a list of probable causes. The user is given advice on how to take care of the problem.

The array of symptoms is amazing. If that were not enough to help anyone diagnose plant problems, the Doctor Optimara also has a link to identify pests, pathogens, and cultural problems. Again, this resource is loaded with information, ranging from pot size, temperature, fertilizer, and more. Clicking on "Thrips" brought up a page

that showed photos of this pest, along with a description, the symptoms of a thrips infestation, and how to treat it.

The virtual tour is best described as fun. Clicking on different sections of an aerial view of the facility brings up pictures of the interior. There are also videos that show what happens in that area.

This column can only discuss the highlights of this web page. This is an enormous site. It is an outstanding resource for anyone interested in plants. Although it is directed at violet owners, the thorough information is applicable to many different plants. This page can be accessed easily by doing a Google search for Optimara Violets or by typing in the web address: www.optimara.com

Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

Joan Baker – Thief River Falls, MN

'Rivermist Watercolor' (10686)
04/22/2014 (J. Baker) Single-semidouble
pale blue pansy/green eye, red-purple rays,
variable red-purple band, green frilled edge.
Medium green, glossy, ruffled. Large

Dmitry Ozherelyev – Moscow, Russia

'PT-Anzhelika' (10687) 05/31/2014
(D. Ozherelyev/T. Pugacheva) Double pink
large star/variable blue fantasy, raspberry sparkle band,
white frilled edge. Medium green, quilted. Standard

'PT-Iskusitel'nitsa' (10688) 05/31/2014 (D.
Ozherelyev/T. Pugacheva) Single-semidouble white
ruffled star/pink patches. Medium green, quilted.
Standard

'PT-Ledi Gamil'ton' (10689) 05/31/2014 (D.
Ozherelyev/T. Pugacheva) Double pink large wavy
star/thin raspberry sparkle edge. Medium-dark green,
plain. Standard

'PT-Luiza' (10690) 05/31/2014 (D. Ozherelyev/T.
Pugacheva) Semidouble pink star/blue fantasy flecks,
streaks and splashes, white wavy edge. Medium-dark
green, ovate, wavy/red back. Standard

'PT-Pervoe Svidanie' (10691) 05/31/2014 (D.
Ozherelyev/T. Pugacheva) Single white sticktite wavy
pansy/pink patches, larger on lower petals. Medium
green, heart-shaped, quilted, serrated. Standard

'RM-Faina' (10692) 05/31/2014 (D. Ozhere-
lyev/N. Skorniakova) Semidouble dark coral star/blue
fantasy. Medium green, girl foliage. Standard

'RM-Korolevskie Kruzheva' (10693)
05/31/2014 (D. Ozherelyev/N. Skorniakova) Double
white frilled large star/variable pink blush, white-green
edge. Medium green, quilted, serrated. Standard



'RM-Pavlina' (10694) 05/31/2014 (D.
Ozherelyev/N. Skorniakova) Single-semi-
double white star/dark pink patches, blue
fantasy streaks and splashes. Medium
green, plain. Standard

'RM-Svet Voskhodiashego Solntsa'
(10695) 05/31/2014 (D. Ozherelyev/N.
Skorniakova) Semidouble-double dark coral
large star/white eye. Medium green, plain.
Standard

'RM-Volshebnyi Tiul'pan' (10696) 05/31/2014
(D. Ozherelyev/N. Skorniakova) Single-semidouble
white bell/dark pink patches, variable raspberry fan-
tasy. Medium green, plain, glossy. Standard

REGISTRATION CHANGES

The following have been changed by the
hybridizers:

'LE-Prekrasnaia Kreolka' (10271) Change blos-
som description from star to *pansy*.

'Lovely Rainbow' (10627) Change name to
'Mag's Lovely Rainbow'.

'Mac's Freckle-faced Redhead' (10501) Change
from Standard to Semiminiature.

'Mac's Misty Meadow' (10153) Single white
sticktite pansy/*variable purple tinge*, green edge.
[change in *italics*]

'Mac's Virtually Velvet' (8754) Change from
Semiminiature to Compact standard.

'Senk's Sven' (9870) Single purple and *variable*
white wasp. Variegated dark green, *pink* and white,
ovate, spooned, hairy/bustle back. [changes in *italics*]
Also change from Semiminiature trailer to
Semiminiature.

THE AFRICAN VIOLET SOCIETY OF AMERICA, INC.
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS
December 31, 2012 & 2013

ASSETS

ASSETS:	2013	2012
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 25,266.10	\$ 21,876.37
Investments	107,985.16	126,868.19
Interest Receivable		939.00
Inventories	9,735.12	20,055.69
Prepaid Expenses	4,219.25	500.00
Restricted Assets:		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	32,942.04	77,160.83
Investments	62,052.12	15,000.00
Capital Assets:		
Land	10,000.00	10,000.00
Other Capital Assets, Net of Depreciation	39,218.48	42,584.63
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>291,416.27</u>	<u>314,984.71</u>

LIABILITIES:

Accrued Payroll Taxes Payable	615.18	689.66
Sales Taxes Payable	568.29	
Deferred Revenue	36,612.77	36,627.83
Deferred Life Membership Revenue	102,979.82	109,777.82
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>140,774.06</u>	<u>147,095.31</u>

NET ASSETS:

Invested in Capital Assets	49,218.48	52,584.63
Board Designated - Convention	10,355.05	5,297.48
Board Designated - Boyce Edens	9,698.99	6,689.45
Board Designated - Hudson	2,842.24	2,796.24
Permanently Restricted	94,994.16	92,160.83
Unrestricted (Deficit)	(16,466.71)	(8,360.77)
TOTAL NET ASSETS	<u>150,642.21</u>	<u>167,889.40</u>

Identifying African Violets with No Name

by Joe Bruns, AVSA Registration Chairman

It is almost impossible to accurately identify an African violet that doesn't have a name tag or other type of identification (a NOID, or a plant with no ID). The African Violet Master List of Species and Cultivars (AVML) and the First Class computer program list more than 16,000 different named African violets and their descriptions. Depending on your NOID, you could find a few dozen that match the characteristics. You might even be able to narrow it down to four or five. But then you would need to choose one of them, and it would be highly unlikely that you would choose the correct name. Besides

that, the AVML has less than half of the named African violets. Even if you found a photo that matched your plant exactly, the odds are great that it is not your plant. So many African violets look the same, and they all grow differently under different growing conditions. It is definitely a mistake to try to identify a NOID in this manner. There are already far too many misidentified African violets out there now. (Just ask anyone who has done classification and entries at an African violet show.) Please don't add to the problem.

AVSA SOCIETY AWARDS NOMINEES NEEDED

By Marge Savage, Chair AVSA Awards Committee

How I missed being in Nashville, and presenting our Society Awards at the AVSA Convention. My many thanks go to **Leonard Re** and the rest of the **Society Awards Committee** who functioned so well in my absence. We have many deserving, dedicated volunteers whom we would like to see nominated. As Leonard presented **Christel Collier** the **Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial Award for Excellence in Affiliate Leadership**, many guests in the audience may have been thinking of club members back home who also showed Christel's same leadership and supporting, faithful spirit. Please contact me about your nominee or attach and e-mail the nomination form found on the website. I can snail mail you the form, gladly, if it is helpful.

We rely upon you, our members, to mail or e-mail names of deserving persons with descriptions of accomplishments of your nominees for these AVSA Society Awards. These need to be sent to me by **November 1, 2014** for the upcoming AVSA Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. Your nomination is valid for three years, after which you may re-nominate your leader. The Society Awards Committee and the Executive Committee will determine the recipients of these awards. A brief list of Society Awards with their descriptions is as follows:

Hudson Memorial Award: Provided by the Mabel and Glenn Hudson Memorial (rather than AVSA) for excellence in affiliate (club) leadership. Affiliate secretaries (or other experienced officers) need to submit names and activities for outstanding leaders of clubs, affiliated with AVSA.

Meritorious Service Award: Awarded to individuals for some special service to AVSA (a certificate).

Honorary One-Year Membership: Awarded for outstanding contributions to AVSA. Required for most other recognition awards (a certificate, plus one year membership).

Continuing Service Award: Awarded for continued outstanding service to AVSA (a certificate). Nominee must first have received the Honorary One-Year Membership.

Honorary Life Membership: Always received by the out-going AVSA President. Alternate years, may be awarded to a worthy nominee who has also been a long-time AVSA member (a certificate, a gold pin, an ID card). This is not to be confused with a Life Membership. (An individual can purchase a Life Membership. You cannot buy an Honorary Life Membership).

Distinguished Service Certificate: Awarded as the highest service award that AVSA may bestow (a certificate). Nominee must first have received the Honorary One-Year Membership and have received the Honorary Life Membership.

Bronze Medal for Horticultural or Scientific Achievement: AVSA's highest award for both scientific and/or horticultural contributions. The nominee is not required to be an AVSA member (a certificate and a plaque with an AVSA medallion).

Previous recipients of these Society Awards may be found on the website at www.avsa.org under Members.

Marge Savage, Chair AVSA Awards Committee

2804 Stutz Drive
Midland, Texas 79705
432.699.4296
savagetom@grandecom.net



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Streptocarpus
'Fleischle's Roulette Azur'

Exhibited by: Gary Dunlap

Hybridized by: Fleischle

Two New African Violets from Russian Hybridizers

Courtesy of Dmitry Ozherelyev



Photo Credit: T. Pugacheva

PT - Anzhelika

*Hybridized by:
T. Pugacheva
Standard*

RM - Pavlina

*Hybridized by:
N. Skornyakova
Standard*



Photo Credit: M. Karpova

AVSA HONOR ROLL OF AFRICAN VIOLETS

Compiled by John T Carter,
1825 West Lincoln St, Broken
Arrow, OK 74012
bestvarieties@avsa.org

1997

Ode to Beauty #7677
(Cox/B. Johnson)
Picasso #6924 (M. Tremblay)

1998

Ness' Crinkle Blue #8136 (D. Ness)
International n/r (B. Johnson)

1999

Milky Way Trail #7469 (J. Stahl)
Ness' Satin Rose #8144 (D. Ness)

2000

Powwow #7708 (K. Stork)
Rob's Sticky Wicket #6467
(R. Robinson)

2001

Windy Day #7719 (Stork/Boone)

2002

There were no 2002 additions to
the Honor Roll of African Violets

2003

Rainbow's Quiet Riot
(R. Wasmund)

2004

Frozen in Time #9167 (S. Sorano)
Orchard's Bumble Magnet #8479
(R. Wilson)

2005

Rebel's Splatter Kake #8695
(R. Bann)

2006

There were no 2006 additions to
the Honor Roll of African Violets

2007

ACA'S Red Ember #8732
(J. Brownlie)

2008

Blue Dragon #9516 (Lyon Green-
houses/P. Sorano)

2009

Bob Serbin #8292 (J. Brownlie)

2011

Plumberry Glow (9187) (Lyndon
Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano)
Aca's Red Ember (8732)
(J. Brownlie)

2012

There are no additions to the
Honor Roll of Violets

2013

Harbor Blue #6174 (T. Weber)

2014

Rob's Chilly Willy #8170
(R. Robinson)
Rob's Fuddy Duddy #7886
(R. Robinson)

To see the Honor Roll listings from 1960 - 1998, refer to
pages 26 & 27 of the May/June 2000 AVM.

*To be in the Honor Roll of African Violets, a variety must have appeared in the
Best Varieties list for three consecutive years.*

*(Minor editorial changes have been made on some of the above cultivars
for compliance with the current MVL)*

Cleaning African Violet Leaves

By Jim Owens

Turn on the faucet with mildly warm (tepid) water (no pressure) and rinse the leaves holding the plant so water does not get into the crown. You may use your thumb to gently rub across the top of each leaf as you wash it. After all leaves

have been rinsed, you may blot excess water off the leaves with a paper towel. Keep the plant out of sunlight until thoroughly dry.

From the AVSA Website FAQ Section

A Family Portrait

By Georgene Albrecht

101 Oak Heights Drive • Oakdale, PA 15071

Email: georgena@verizon.net



Streptocarpus 'Arctic Twilight'

The ruffles are just magnificent. There are three to four blooms on each peduncle. The blooms are also very long-lasting. However, the color does fade in the heat of summer. Bloom color during cool temperatures is much more intense. Streps love packaged soilless mixes, provided perlite is added to cut it by about one-third. Re-

member, the more often the old, flowerless leaves are removed, the faster new leaves will be produced to form new flower buds.

Growstone

There is a new substitute for perlite. Growstone, a 100% recycled glass product, was available at our orchid show. It can be used over and over. Simply rinse the moss and other soil ingredients from the old potting medium and sterilize with hot water. It comes in two sizes, large and extra large crumbles. Perhaps it could be pounded into finer granules. The texture reminds me of lava rock. My orchids love it. Although made from glass, it is not sharp like glass. Mine came from Roberts Flower Supply, 12390 Root Rd., Columbia Station, Ohio 44028-9588. (www.orchidmix.com) Phone: 440-236-5571. It is about five dollars for a gallon bag.



The Turners

Last fall **Steve** and **Donna Turner** paid me a visit. It was wonderful to have them. How delightful to hear that they sold out of plants at the Nashville Convention! The plants they sell are so husky and healthy. The name of their business is Stars N Streps, a very clever play-on-words, for chimera African violets

and *Streptocarpus* plants. They plan to sell at AVSA, Ohio State AVS, and other major conventions. Welcome.

Turnover

Well, it is time for me to turn this column over to someone else. I want to thank **Mel Grice** for writing with me and, of course, I thank Ruthie, for always being so supportive in every way. I also want to thank **Marge Savage** and **AVSA** for the wonderful award presented to me at the Detroit Convention. And, a special "thank-you" to my dear friend, **Pat Hancock**, who has continually inspired me and encouraged me with her friendship and her lovely hybrids.

Maybe there will be articles from me in the near future. I thank all of you for sharing, growing, and appreciating our beautiful plants. God bless you.

Get the Word Out!

Tips for Publicizing Your Show

By Maureen Pratt

maurpratt@aol.com • www.maureenpratt.com

You're almost there! Everyone in your club has worked hard, nurtured and prepped beautiful plants, and put the finishing touches on annual show and sale details.

Now, how do you get people to come?

Friends and family undoubtedly know about the event already; it's no secret with them that you're working toward "the big event" (and, in fact, you might have enlisted their help!) Flyers cast a wider net at work, church, and other public places where your members have contacts.

But, what about "the media?" Have you reached out to print, web, radio, and television outlets? Or, have past efforts yielded so little that you've given up on getting press?

I'm relatively new to showing AVs, but not new to working in and with the media. I've been a journalist and author for more than twenty years, have "guested" on radio and television shows such as the Hallmark Channel's "New Morning," and have even had my own television show that was satellite fed to more than 150 countries for more than a year. Last fall, I volunteered to handle publicity for my club's annual show and sale, and was able to use my journalism experience to "cast a wider net." The results were encouraging, setting a good stage for this year. Here are some tips for publicizing your show:

(NOTE: None of these tips should cost your club any money besides, perhaps, the printing of flyers; I don't recommend paying to publicize your event because there are usually enough free outlets in any given area).

Lay the groundwork. Start planning your publicity campaign as soon as your club has set the date for your show. Before you can reach out to media, you have to know what outlets exist in your area. What daily, weekly, and monthly print newspapers circulate nearby? Which radio and television stations are local, and which are national

affiliates? Who in your club has a website, Facebook, and Twitter account, or other Internet exposure? What garden clubs are in your area, and how can you reach them? (This was particularly successful for us last year)

Write a press release, event blurb, and a pitch – and make sure the information is all correct and properly spelled.

The press release is a one-page news announcement that should include: What your event is (show/sale, theme, size of event), when and where it will take place, and information on parking, entrance fees, or other details. Include at least one person's contact information, including cell phone and email. Also include significant or unique facts such as whether it's the 50th show (for example) or any other special information. (I'm happy to send you the press release I wrote for our show if you'd like to use it as a template – email me at maurpratt@aol.com.) Use enthusiastic but professional language, and be as lengthy as you need to be, no more. Editors get hundreds of press releases a year and don't have much time to read them.

The event blurb is the two-sentence write-up that will be included in a media outlet's ongoing list of community events. No embellishment, here – just the facts (who, what, when, where, and contact info).

Your pitch should be a distilled version of your press release and will be used when you call media outlets about possibly writing or airing a news feature about the show. Aim for three sentences that describe your event and why the editor would be interested in covering it for their paper/station. Practice your pitch until you feel secure and sound natural, enthusiastic, and clear.

Set a schedule. When you've identified the media outlets and have your press release and pitch, contact the outlets to find out what their

deadlines are for 1) printing notices about your event, and 2) possibly featuring your event in a news/special interest story. ALL MEDIA OUTLETS HAVE DEADLINES, AND IF YOU MISS THE DEADLINE, YOU'LL MISS OUT ON GETTING YOUR EVENT PUBLICIZED THERE! (Apologies for the all-caps, but deadlines are serious business in the media, and there isn't a grace period, especially for the daily and weekly pubs.) Also, remember that garden clubs' newsletters have deadlines, too, so don't wait until the last minute to send them information.

Develop a master calendar and mark all deadlines on it so you can see your timeline for publicity.

Next, send in your press release and pitch your story – IN ADVANCE OF OUTLET'S DEADLINES. For monthly papers, work two months in advance, for weekly papers, work a month in advance, and for daily papers (and local radio and television stations), work two to three weeks in advance (unless the editors advise you otherwise). This allows the editors time to consider your information in light of the other news items/stories they have, and gives you time to follow up in case your story gets lost.

For the Internet, time your postings and Tweets so that they run fairly close to the weekend of your event; a long lag time between posting and the event might mean no one will see (or remember) your info in time to attend.

Follow up. Close to the "drop dead deadline" of each outlet, politely and enthusiastically contact the editor to see if he or she will be able to cover

your show. Offer to provide additional information, if they need it, and stress the community interest of your show and AVs in general (the most popular houseplant in America). If you have a willing club member, even suggest that a reporter visit him or her in advance of the show to see and report on what it takes to prepare plants for show (great pictures and much interest can result from this).

Carry through. Publicity does not stop the day of the show! As people arrive and members circulate with the public, ask visitors how they learned about the show and/or what drew them to come. Encourage them to purchase a violet (though most people don't need encouraging once they see those beauties on display!) and come to a club meeting. Welcome them to "your house," and invite them to make it theirs, too.

After the show, do a "debriefing" with members about the anecdotes they collected from speaking with visitors. Tally up the number of people who came because of an article, listing, garden club newsletter, etc. Keep records for next year, especially the names of reporters and editors who were particularly helpful (send Thank You notes, too), and clips of articles and listings.

Much like cultivating our plants, publicity is an ongoing, relationship-building activity, and the better media professionals get to know you and your group, the more likely it will be that you'll get coverage. With patience, diligence, and a positive approach, you can spread the word, grow your attendance, and provide encouraging and inspiring news for bad-news-saturated media outlets – a win-win situation, for sure!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**2015 Kansas City, MO
AVSA Convention Dates:
May 24 - May 31, 2015**

Gutter System for African Violets & Episcias

By Lawannea Miller

True Grit Ranch Inc. • TrueGritRanch@hotmail.com

Please keep in mind that I do not show at this time! If I were showing these violets I would be using a different system.



That being said, this is how I am now growing my African violets and episcias.

I use 3" square pots, Home Depot™ 10' white PVC Gutter, End Caps, and the Gutter Hangers for this system.

This system works perfect for me for several reasons:

- 1) I can water all at once.
- 2) They have room to spread their wings.
- 3) I can rotate them with their square pots so that they grow uniformly.
- 4) The gutter acts as a plant/pot ring and helps the foliage stay upright.
- 5) They are on beautiful display in my family room so that I can see them and they keep me company.
- 6) They are out of reach of my son!
- 7) I save on Electrical usage, using the natural daylight.
- 8) My plants are not three deep, requiring me to wade through them and knock some out of whack to get to them for trimming, turning, and checking them.

I am going to make adjustments; putting egg crate in the bottom (also available at HD in the



lighting grid section) and felt matting to let them self-water.

If I really wanted to get technical I could connect the end caps with 1/4" PVC with swamp cooler type floats and put them all on a timer to water once every two - three weeks, or so, predicated upon

season and climate! (...talk about lazy, eh?)

The gutters come in sections about 10' long and you can cut them with a hacksaw and then put the ends on as you need them for your window size. ...I think I may have started a rush to Home Depot™...

Please forgive the dirt/messiness in my photos, as I am in the middle of an entire home remodel. Feel Free to Share.

If you have any ideas for improvement, please write to: TrueGritRanch@hotmail.com or visit www.TrueGritRanchinc.com





Gutter end caps



Three rows of gutter

Tina Moreno's Date Hybrid Preservation Wanted List

Gecko2T@gmail.com

I am putting out a list of **Dates hybrids**. Please let me know if you have any of these please! Thank you!

Black Friar
Blue Wasp
Burgandy Wasp

Calico Wasp
Cool Hand Pink
Dates Julilee
Dave Masterson
Wasp
Fantasy Wasp
Fire Wasp
Knight Light Wasp

Krista Lynn
Lillian Lou
Lithe Lassie
Lunar Lily
Merida Wasp
Peppermint Frost
Pink Cherubs
Pink Fingers

Pink Nosegay
Pink Wasp
Rachel
Royal Mountbatton
San Francisco Wasp
Wham Bang

Rob's Vanilla Pink

*Exhibited by:
Catherine Thompson
Hybridized by:
R. Robinson
Miniature*



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Shows and Judges

Bill Foster, Shows and Judges Committee

3610 Gray Drive • Mesquite, TX 75150
Email: 1bpfoster@sbcglobal.net

Those of you who were unable to attend the Nashville Convention missed something very special. The Holtkamps, Lone Star AVC, and Mid-Atlantic AVC made this a memorable occasion!

Two of our judges will become **Master Judges** in October. They are **Robert Clark of Seattle, Washington** and **Wilmer Wolverton of Grain Valley, Missouri**.

The Judges' Breakfast was quite lively, as usual. Here are some of the questions and answers.

Why was a natural wood container in the dish garden class in the show? Dish gardens are defined on page 70 of the Handbook. Just about any shallow container can be used. A dish garden can only have one planting area, and this natural wood container only had one planting area. The container in the show could have been a bit shallower, but the height of the plants was in scale of with the depth of the container.

May a design in a regular design class be suspended from the top of the niche? Yes, unless the schedule states otherwise.

In a monochromatic design, can natural elements, such as rocks or wood, be used in their natural state, or must they color treated? Monochromatic means one color or shades or hues of one color. Look at a color wheel, which shows the basic color and all the hues that belong to that color. So, if you can find a natural piece that falls within the shades/hues that you need, yes, but you can't always find that special piece.

Explain (what I think is a) stringent interpretation of limited use of driftwood in dish gardens. The definition of dish gardens state that the plants must be planted and growing in the container. Driftwood and rocks may be used as accessories, but *not* to represent the height you need to balance the planting. Driftwood and rocks are not growing.



We have heard rumors that dozens of plants (less than nine inches) were not allowed in shows. Hopefully, they were just rumors. We asked for a show of hands of any knowledge of this actually happening, and no one raised their hand.

Please change the first sentence under **CONSIDERATIONS FOR JUDGING STANDARD AFRICAN VIOLETS** on page 52 to read: **SIZE:** A standard plant should be more than 8 inches in diameter.

Please, let's try to put the 9" rule thing to rest. We had many requests to increase the size of small standards to something larger than semiminatures. The reasoning was to try to eliminate immature plants or plants that looked more like semiminatures or standard starter plants in the classes with standard plants. It was never our intention to eliminate small mature standards from being entered in shows. Judges should be able to recognize a mature plant by sight. We have included, under *condition*, page 52, that up to 3 points may be deducted from standards less than 9" in diameter. This does not mean that you *must* deduct all 3 points. This has to do with size. A judge may still take off points under symmetry if appropriate. Just remember when the statement reads *up to 3 inches for each instance*, means a fraction of a point to 3 inches.

Please disregard the section of the Handbook (most of page 76 through 80) for Affiliate Publications. This has been discontinued due to lack of entries. The pages will be renumbered when the Handbook is revised.

Hopefully, (in the not too far future) the Handbook will be offered as a download from the Internet. Work has begun on this task.

We will discuss more questions in the next column. Here are some additional guidelines for selecting top awards in show.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING TOP AWARD WINNERS

The award for best miniature should come from Collections, Best in Class from all miniature classes, and possibly from a miniature that had won in the Best New Introduction or a miniature in an Unusual Container. The new introduction, or a miniature in an unusual container, would need to be judged again using the scale of points used in regular classes. (NOTE: THIS WOULD APPLY TO ANY TOP AWARD WHEN AN ENTRY IN EITHER OF THESE TWO CLASSES IS BEING

CONSIDERED FOR A TOP AWARD.)

The award for Best Semiminature should come from Collections, Best in Class in the semiminature classes, or see "NOTE" above.

The award for Best Trailer should be selected from collections or Best in Class winners from all trailer classes.

The best Saintpaulia species should come from Collections or from Best in Class(es) for species. (NOTE: A SAINTPAULIA SPECIES CAN BE BEST IN SHOW, BUT NOT BEST STANDARD, BEST MINIATURE, BEST SEMI-MINIATURE, OR BEST TRAILER.)

Methods of Watering

By Heather Harkness

Top Watering as the name implies, is the method whereby the plant is watered by pouring water onto the soil at the top of the pot. Several points need to be considered here. A watering can with a long thin spout that can fit under and between the leaves is essential. This helps prevent water from spilling on to the leaves. If this does occur, any water on the leaves or in the center of the plant may be blotted up with tissues. (In the natural environment leaves get wet from rain, but indoors it is not wise to leave water pooling on leaves or in the center of the plant. The leaves may become marked or burned from the light on the water, especially if there is fertilizer in the water.) It is a good idea to ensure that the water is applied evenly around the pot, or at least in three places to ensure even distribution of water to the plant. There needs to be enough water to dampen the whole root ball with the excess running out the bottom of the pot.

Do not leave the plant sitting in this excess water. Sit the pot on newspaper to soak up the excess. Lukewarm water should be used as cold water can chill the roots, slow growth, and cause marks on the leaves, even if they have not been wet. Although the top of the potting mix should become dry before the next watering, do not allow the root ball to become entirely dry as it is difficult to adequately moisten the dried out peat in the potting mix.

Top watering is an ideal method for the beginning grower with just a few plants as it gives the opportunity to examine the plant for any problems with symmetry, pests, crown rot, or happily, to just

admire a beautiful plant. It can also give the grower experience of judging whether the plant is too dry (feels light weight) or too wet (feels heavy). Nevertheless, it is a time-consuming method for those with large collections. This method is also used for leaching when water is applied from the top and allowed to run through the soil in order to eliminate any buildup of fertilizer salts.

Bottom watering entails standing the pot in water. While this method may go a long way in preventing water from getting on the leaves, the disadvantages seem to outweigh the advantage. If the pot is left in the container of water too long, the plant may become waterlogged, providing the opportunity for crown rot and root rot to develop. It is essential not to leave the pot standing in water, for too long, and also to remember to empty the saucers of unused water. With this method, fertilizer salts tend to rise to the top of the pot and form a brown unsightly crust around the rim. This leads to damage of any leaves resting on the rim and causes these otherwise healthy leaves to deteriorate and be lost. However, this buildup of fertilizer salts may be avoided by leaching - watering from the top every month to six weeks and by re-potting at least every six months. If you choose to use this method, allow the plants to sit in a saucer of water for only as long as is needed. You can measure this by picking up the pot and feeling its weight.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia

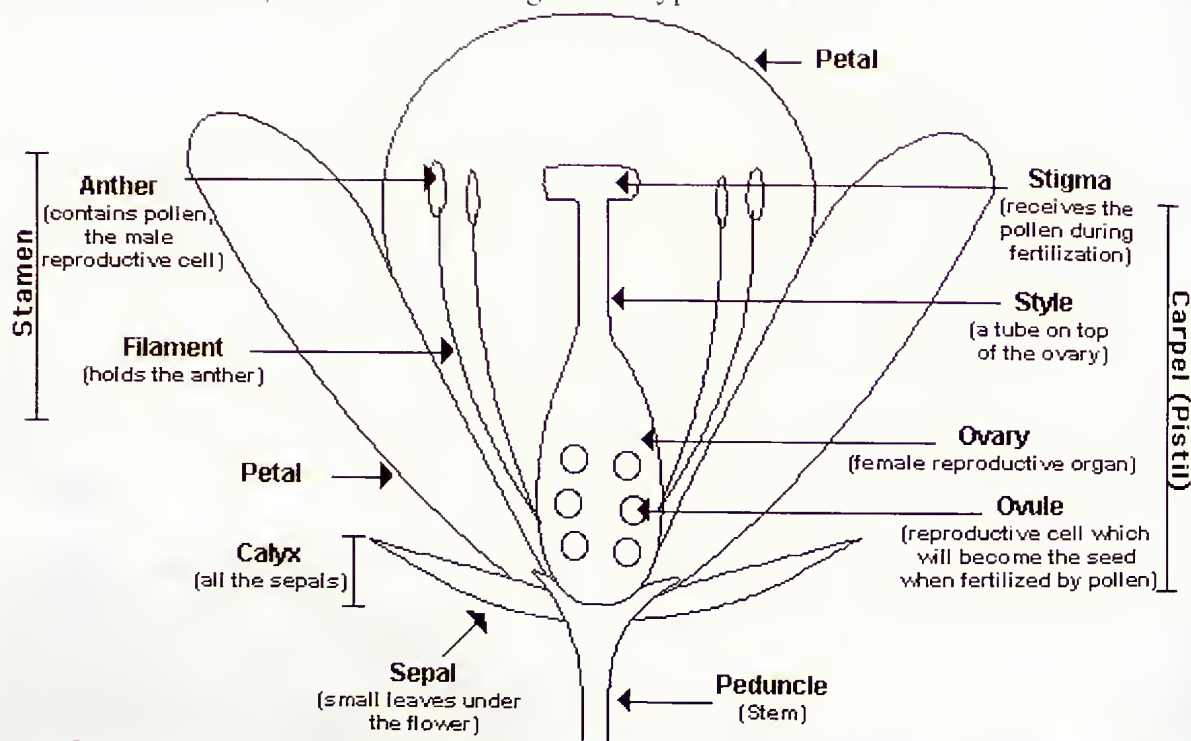
Parts of a Flower

By Ernie Stall

When I was in college, I received a minor in horticulture. Part of obtaining that degree involved learning the technical names of plant parts. Recently, I was reading an article about hybridizing African violets, and the author was explaining how to transfer pollen from the male parts of the flower to the female parts of the flower. Of course, the author was using the

appropriate terminology to refer to the flower parts, but it made me realize that while I recognize most of the terms, I have forgotten what they refer to. So, I decided to familiarize myself with the terms, and I thought I would share what I learned with you.

The following picture illustrates the parts of a typical flower:



A flower contains all of the plant's reproductive organs.

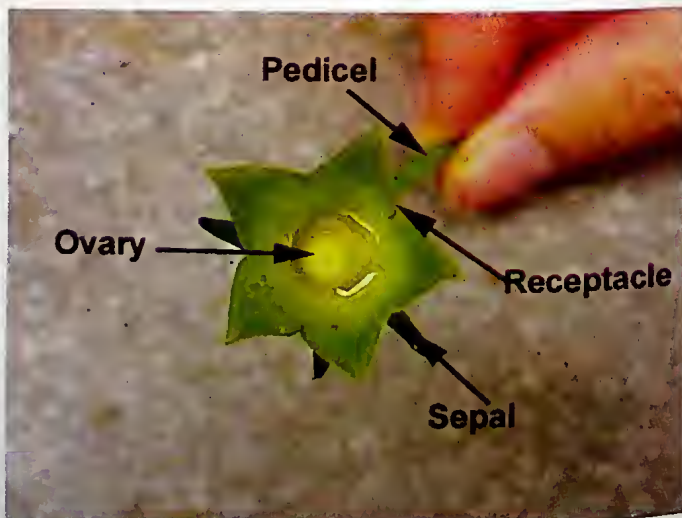
The **peduncle** is the main flower stem. It grows out of the crown of the violet and supports the blooms.

A **pedicel** is another type of flower stem.

It is a secondary stem, which grows from the peduncle and supports a single bloom. Multiple pedicels grow from a peduncle.

The **receptacle** is the swollen tip of the pedicel that supports the flower.

The **sepals** are typically green and are modified leaves that cover and protect the flower bud before it opens. They grow from



the receptacle and also support the flower. Collectively, the sepals form the **calyx**.

The **petals** are the colored portions of the African violet flower. Petals are sometimes referred to as lobes. Collectively, the petals are called the **corolla**. Single blooms are comprised of five petals. Double blooms have additional petals inside the outer petals. The **perianth** is made up of the calyx and the corolla. The **pistil** is the female structure of the bloom.

The pistil contains the female reproductive organs of the flower, which are the stigma, the style, the ovary, and the ovule.

The **stigma** is the sticky tip of the pistil that receives pollen to fertilize the flower.

The **style** is the long, thin, filamentous tube that connects the stigma to the ovary. It is through the style that the pollen fertilizes the ovule inside the ovary.

The **ovary** is the structure that contains the ovules. The ovary is more or less a protective chamber for the ovules.

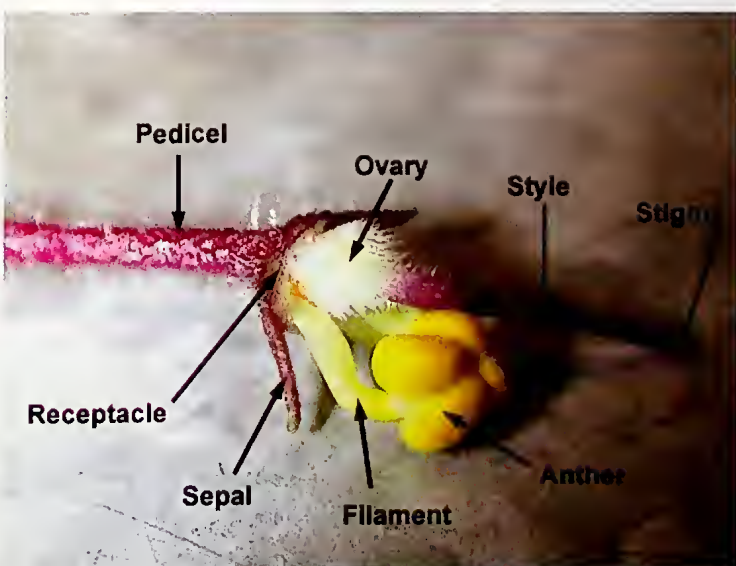
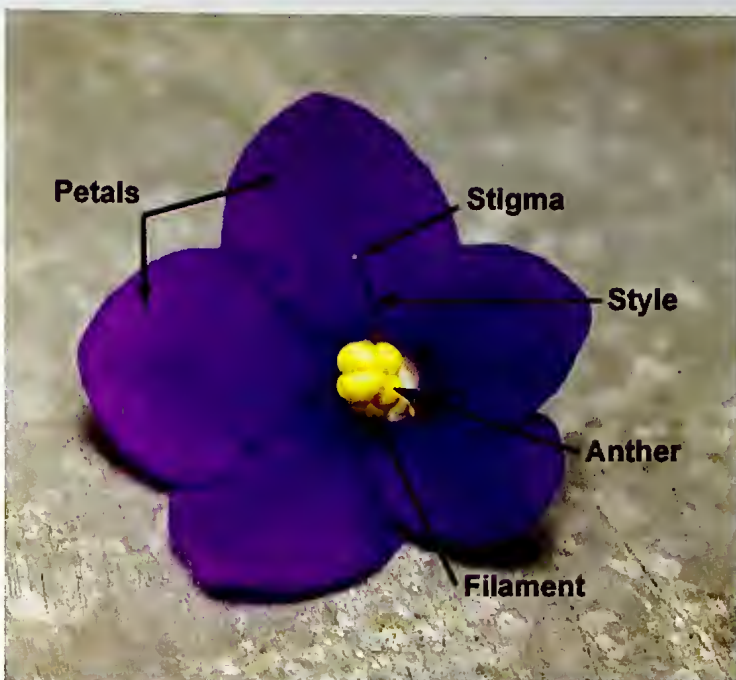
The **ovule** contains the female reproductive cells which, when pollinated, develop into a seed.

The **stamen** is the male reproductive structure of a bloom. It is made up of a filament and an anther.

The **filament** is the stem, or stalk, of the stamen and supports the anther. The filament also carries nutrients to the anther.

The **anther** is the part of the stamen that produces pollen.

Pollen contains the male DNA of the plant. It is usually yellow or greenish-yellow in color and is produced by the anther. When it lands on the stigma, the pollen produces a tube that travels down through the style to the ovary.



Originally reprinted from *African Violet Notes*, the newsletter of the Columbus African Violet Society, Volume 15, Issue 10, October 2013, Ernie Stall, editor.

"And the winners are ..." 434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

By Mary J. Corondan

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

AVC OF BURLINGTON COUNTY, NJ – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Nostalgia, Picasso, Buckeye Daydreamer; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Boo Man, Rob's Calypso Beat, Cupid's Jewel; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Foxwood Trail; Best Standard: Buckeye Nostalgia; Best Semiminiature: Boo Man; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Silvert; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Sandy Skalski**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jersey Jackpot, Jolly Orchid, Petite Blarney; Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *ionantha* var. *ionantha*, *Saintpaulia* clone *pendula* var. *kizarae*, *Saintpaulia brevopilosa*; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Gesneriad: *Nautilocalyx grandulifer*; Best Design, **Susan Arnao**. Design Sweepstakes, **Laurel Brown**.



Best in Show/Best Standard: Harbor Blue; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *grotei*, **Barbara Donsky**. Best Trailer: Summer Wind Trail, **Marge Jasinski**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Holly Pohl**.

AVS OF MINNESOTA, MN – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: The Alps, Frozen in Time, Rebel's Rose Bud; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Frosted Denim, Precious Red, Jolly Orchid; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rocky Mountain Trail; Best Standard: Yukako; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *orbicularis*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kathy Lahti**. Best Semiminiature: Ness' Sno Fun; Design Sweepstakes, **Jude Neumann**. Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia cardinalis* 'Innocence', **Terry Klemesrud**. Best Design, **Jinean Schofield**.

AVC OF MORRIS COUNTY, NJ – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ness' Candy Pink, Optimara EverGrace, Irish Pink; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Mini Sota, Irish Flirt, Rob's Dodo Bird; Best in Show/Best Standard: Ness' Candy Pink; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Dodo Bird; Best Miniature: Planet Kid; Best Trailer: Jersey Trail; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Bob Kurzynski**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa* Mather E; Best Gesneriad: *Columnnea* 'Scanden's Fendheri', **Jill Fischer**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Karyn Cichocki**.

AV AND GESNERIAD SOCIETY OF WESTERN NY, NY – Winners:

Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Inner Orbit, Rob's Zipper Zapper, Rob's Fuzzy Navel; Best

Semiminiature: Rob's Inner Orbit, **Judy O'Neil**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* clone *grandifolia* No. 237, *Saintpaulia* clone *grotei* Silvert, *Saintpaulia* clone *confusa* Uppsala 2005-0419; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* Collection, **Paul Kroll**.

AVS OF SPRINGFIELD, PA – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Del's Spring Blush, Optimara Chico, Tatanka, **Peggy Mooney**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Yellowstone, Ma's Goodnight Kiss, Red Mount Fuji, **Neil Lipson**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone Kacharoroni, *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone House of Amani, *Saintpaulia* 5h clone *velutina*, **Pam Orris**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Rosie Ruffles; Best Miniature: Jolly Diamond, **Leslie Swezey**. Best Semiminiature: Frosty Bubbles; Design Sweepstakes, **Barbara Jones**. Best Trailer: Rob's Gundaroo, **Erika Geimonen**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Joan Santino**. Best Design, **Leskie Fetrow**.

ALBUQUERQUE AVC, NM – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Chinook Wind, Optimara South Dakota, Optimara Trinidad; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Jo Ellen Bowden**. Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Humpty Doo, **Lona Pi-**

danick. Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Renia', **Kathy Hajner.** Best Design, **Janette Carver.** Design Sweepstakes, **June Spooner.**

ANNAPOLIS VALLEY AVS, NOVA SCOTIA

– **Winners:** Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Seductress, Frozen in Time, Apache Freedom; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Dodo Bird, Norton's Elaine, Morgan's Papua Pearl; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Rob's Dodo Bird; Best Standard: Frozen in Time; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Heather Demers.** Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy, **Anne Brown.** Best Trailer: Bashou, **Debra Carey.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Haru No Mizu', **Mike McLeod.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Frances Shilliday.**

BAY STATE AVS, MA – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Silverglade Puffs, Blushing Ivory, Granger's Carnival; Best Standard: Silverglade Puffs, **Susan Gimblet.** Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Optimara Little Comanche; Design Sweepstakes, **Sharon Rosenzweig.** Best Miniature: Everdina, **Eleanor MacIver.** Best Trailer: Rob's Willawong, **Sherry Pearl.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *grotei*, **Nancy Manozzi.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Spin Art'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Holly Walker.**

BERGEN COUNTY AVS, NJ – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, EK-Blue-eyed Russia, Frozen in Time; Best in Show/Best Standard: Jersey Snow Flakes; Best Semiminiature: Ness' Angel Glitter; Best Miniature: Wichita Baby; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Barbara Church.** Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Keiko', **Lee Borey.** Best Design, **Sharon Lynch.**

BURBANK AND MONTROSE AV SOCIETIES, CA – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Painted Desert, Taffeta Blue, Rainbow's Neon Electra; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Mac's Scorching Sun, Ness' Grape Fizz, Sierra Sunrise; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Rob's Twinkle Blue; Best Standard: Rainbow's Neon Electra; Best Semiminiature: Thunder Surprise; Best Trailer: Rob's Sticky Wicket; Horticulture Sweepstakes,

Gay Wilson. Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *pendula*, **Maureen Pratt.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Kansas City O', **Hannah Olson.**

CAPITAL CITY AVS, CA – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Mirror Image, Ma's Glass Slipper, Wild Irish Rose; Best in Show/Best Standard: Wild Irish Rose; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Jeani Hatfield.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Allegro Watermelon Ruffles, Jolly Frills, Rob's Boogie Woogie; Best Semiminiature: Jersey Sugar Plums; Best Miniature: Imp's Fortuitous Fancy; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Cindi Nofziger.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia shumensis*, **Jeannie Myers.** Best Design, **Kathy Norton.**

CAPITAL DISTRICT AVS, NY – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Jersey Snow Flakes, Ma's Easter Parade, Inner Strength; Best Trailer: Rob's Gundaroo; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Margaret Califano.** Best in Show/Best Standard: Tineke; Best Semiminiature: Fireworks; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5a clone *grandifolia* #237; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Alissa', **Patti Freed.** Best Miniature: Precious Red, **Dorothy Raymond.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Kathy Schnurr.**

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AVS, CA (Correction) – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, Optimara Glacier, Lucien Croteau, **Sharon Granicy.** Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Senk's Vespa Verde; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *tongwensis*, **Renee Wilson.** Best Standard: Optimara Modesty, **Lola Sutherland.** Best Miniature: Gleeful Elk, **Mary Thompson.** Best Trailer: Lil Runaround, **Viktoria Granicy.** Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Priscilla', **Mary Louise Newton.** Best Design, **Sue Haffner.** Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Michelle Vandergon.** Design Sweepstakes, **Connie Morton.**

CENTRAL FLORIDA AVS, FL (Correction) –

Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Deep Sky, Frozen in Time, Mindi Brooke, **Elvie Blakely.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Wrangler's

Spanish Cavalier, Optimara Ontario, Optimara EverGrace; Best Miniature: Optimara Little Coral; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Linda Price**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Blue Dragon; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* "Thad's Coral Reef", **Evelyn Briggs**. Best Semiminiature: Cupid's Jewel, **Elizabeth Zaorski**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola*, **Ralph Zaorski**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Cheryl Luna**.

CINCINNATI AVS, OH – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Red Robe, Lacy Lass, Optimara EverGrace; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cool Blue, Boo Man, Rob's Antique Rose; Best Standard: Optimara EverGrace; Best Miniature: Rob's Jitterbug; Best Trailer: Rob's Gundaroo; Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola*, **Pat Gibson**. Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Jolly Texan; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Penny Wichman**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Rachel', **Al Cenci**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Mel Grice**.

COLUMBUS AVS, OH – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: B-Man's Auola, The Alps, Opera's Romeo; 2nd Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia rupicola*, *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *grotei*, *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone *tongwensis*, **Richard Carr**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Mac's Misty Meadow, Rob's Fuddy Dddy; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Latino, **Julie Jones**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Mac's Kismet's Knight, Windsome, Little Blue Bandit; Best Miniature: Windsome; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Cathy Willis**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone Cha Simba, *Saintpaulia* clone Kacharoni, *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa*; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Nancy Carr**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Ian-Minuet, **Susan Joy**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina dryas* 'Hisako', **Donna Vogelpohl**.

DELAWARE AV AND GESNERIAD SOCIETY, DE – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Green Horizon, Mirror Image, Optimara EverGrace, **Mark Griffith**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Little Pro, Snug-

gles; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuddy Duddy; Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy, **Bobbie LaFashia**. Best Standard, **Carol Moody**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa*, **Stephanie Griffith**. Best Gesneriad: *Aeschynanthus lobbianus*, **Diane Abramson**. Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Terry Celano**. Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Barbara Borleske**.

DIXIE AVS, LA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Ethereal Fairy, Cajun's Beautiful Oblivion, Cajun's Coujon; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cajun's Lil Tizzy, Cajun's Lil Sprinkles, Cajun's Le Bon Ton Roule; Best in Show/Best Standard: Cajun's Pink Crepe Paper; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Belinda Thibodeaux**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Combustible Pigeon; Best Miniature: Rob's Jitterbug, **Laura Moser**. Best Trailer: Baby Brian; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone *rupicola*; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina tamiana*, **Wilhelmina Allen**. Best Design, **Ruth Goeke**. Design Sweepstakes, **Becky McMeel**.

THE EVENING AVC OF DES MOINES, IA – Winners: Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Peedletuck, Cherry Princess, Rob's Kitten Caboodle; Best Miniature: Rob's Love Bite; Best Trailer: Jersey Girl Trail; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5h clone *velutina* lite; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Kathy Mathews**. Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Jolly Wine-O; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Strawberry Patch', **Betty Kaldenberg**.

FIRST AVS OF WICHITA FALLS, TX – Winners: Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Jolly Dark Clouds, **Gail Elmore**. Best Standard: Optimara Isabelle; Best Miniature: Jolly Sailor; Best Trailer: Sweet Sam; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Silvert; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* Tatoo; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Patricia Daniel**. Best Design, **Allene Peek**.

FIRST HALIFAX AVS, NOVA SCOTIA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Frozen in Time, Psychedelic Show, Buckeye Seductress; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Sister

Sylvia, Jolly Devil, Rob's Dodo Bird; Best Standard: Frozen in Time; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Dodo Bird, **Heather Demers**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Picasso, Buckeye Cornucopia, Sweet Tea; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Playgirl, Mac's Carnival Clown, Eternal Orbit; Best AVSA Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* clone *difficilis* Mather No. 2, *Saintpaulia* clone *orbicularis* var. *purpurea*, *Saintpaulia* clone *velutina* Amazon; Best Miniature: Aca's Pink Pet; Best Trailer: Broadway Star Trail; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *difficilis* Mather No. 2; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Nia'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Anne Brown**. Best Design, **Audrey Moir**. Design Sweepstakes, **Patty Vaison**.

GARDEN STATE AVC, NJ – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Cranberry

Sparkler, Rosie Ruffles, Paula's PB and J; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Beginner's Luck, Jersey Lilacs, Jersey Little Devil; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Eternal Orbit; Best Standard: Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler; Best Miniature: Petite Blarney; Best Trailer: Sweet Amy Sue; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Pink Acajou'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Paula Bal**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Gleeful Elf, Texas Space Dust, Persian Prince, **Tim Ferguson**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *confusa*; Best Design, **Grace Egan**. Design Sweepstakes, **Grace Rarich**.

MEMPHIS AVS, TN – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Faded Denim, Harbor Blue, Optimara EverPraise; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Rinky Dink, Jolly Orchid, Jolly Cutie Pie; Best in Show/Best Standard: Buckeye Sentimental Reasons; Best Semiminiature: Teen Kiss; Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Brenda Brasfield**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, Super Duper, Maggie Lee, **Carolyn Walker**. Best Trailer: Pixie Pink, **Judy Ellis**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5a clone *grandifolia* No. 237, **Marian Zoller**. Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Karlyn', **Ann Shirley**. Best Design, **Geneva Stagg**. Design Sweepstakes, **Rocky Bichon**.

OSHKOSH VS, WI – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Red Mount Fuji, Optimara California II, Ma's Wicket Witch; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Diamond, Jolly Sailor, Optimara Little Rhodonite; Best in Show/Best Standard: Ma's Wicked Witch; Best Miniature: Jolly Sailor; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone *ionantha*; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Patina'; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Kevin Degner**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cool Blue, Little Pro, Slow Dancin'; Best Semiminiature: Cool Blue, **Betsy Fox**. Best Trailer: Falling Snow, **Cathy Heider**. Design Sweepstakes, **Doug Kindschuh**.

RICHMOND AVS, VA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, Rebel's Rose Bud, Wild Irish Rose; Best in Show/Best Standard: Wild Irish Rose, **David Dick**. Best Semiminiature: Rob's Slap Happy, **Barbara Koski**. Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid, **Josane Wagner**. Best Trailer: Senk's Try the Decaf, **Bill Schmidt**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5a clone *grandifolia*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Barbara Stewart**. Best Gesneriad: *Columnea* 'Sundancer', **Nell Reese**. Best Design, **Vicki Carr**. Design Sweepstakes, **Sharon Long**.

SAINTPAULIA SOCIETY OF LONG ISLAND, NY – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Lyon's Lavender Magic, Harbor Blue, Lyon's Red Rocket; Best in Show/Best Standard: Lyon's Lavender Magic; Best Miniature: Rob's Love Bite; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Falling Stars'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Joseph Palagonia**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Blackberry Jam, Spanish Dancer, Buckeye Colossal; Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subsp. *grandifolia*, **Edward Bradford**. Best Semiminiature: Ness' Sno Fun; Best Trailer: Rob's Gundaroo; Design Sweepstakes, **Carolyn Klein**. Best Design, **Claire Schirtzer**.

SHO-ME AVC, MO – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Cherished Hope, Cajun's Delicate Touch, Cajun's Roses Anyone; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Cajun's Lil Sprinkles, Cajun's Lil Joy, Eternal Orbit; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Pink Star Lou; Best Standard:

Cajun's Roses Anyone; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Sunday; Best Miniature: Roller Rink; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Lynn Canning**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'First Time'; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Linda Hall**.

STAMPEDE CITY AVS, ALBERTA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ness' Glitter Lace, Optimara EverPraise, EK-Raduga Liubvi; Best Standard: Ness' Glitter Lace; Best Miniature: Morgan's All White Now, **Maureen Tkachuk**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Austin's Smile, Optimara Michigan, Harbor Blue; Best Design, **Jean Melnechuk**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Delicious, Rob's Pogo Stick, Rob's Dodo Bird; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Delicious; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Kee Wee', **Melanie Duan**. Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Design Sweepstakes, **Lisa Kampel**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* clone *confusa* Mather E; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Norma Kunzel**.

SWEETWATER AVS, NY – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Lyon's Lavender Magic, Bridal Bouquet, RS Belaia-Magiia; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Joyce Rodler**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Inner Strength, Blushing Ivory, Blue Mink; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Ramblin' Amethyst; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Carolyn Klein**. Best Miniature: Precious Red, **Jeanne Damaso**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5g clone *pendula*, **Jeanette Haynal**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Rachel', **Esperanza Kesler**.

TIDEWATER AVS, VA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cranberry Crush, Sweet Affair, Super Duper; Best in Show/Best Standard: Cranberry Crush; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Carol Van**. Best Semiminiature: Irish Flirt; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Destiny', **LaDonna Hopson**. Best Miniature: Wichita Baby; Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Pat Knight**.

TORONTO AVS, ONTARIO – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Okie Easter Bunny, The King, The Alps; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Crinkle Blue, Rob's Fuzzy Navel, Rob's Cool Fruit; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Cool Fruit; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Bret Flewelling**. 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Buckeye Seductress, Smokey Moon, Kamennyi Tsvetok; Best in Show/Best Standard: Smokey Moon, **Olga Semova**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Morgan's Pu Yi, Rob's Boogie Woogie, Rob's Monkeyshines, **Annie Simard**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 3 clone *shumensis*, *Saintpaulia* 8 clone Cha Simba, *Saintpaulia* 5c2 clone *diplotricha* Uppsala 3084; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5c2 clone *diplotricha* Uppsala 3084, **Beverley Williams**. 2nd Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *magungensis*, *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* van Someren, *Saintpaulia rupicola*, **Pierre LaForest**. Best Trailer: Mac's Northern Lights, **Bill Price**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Omen', **Arleen Dewell**. Design Sweepstakes, **Steve Kerr**. Best Design, **Sayeh Beheshti**.

TOWN AND COUNTRY AVS, OH – Winners: Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Jolly Mischief; Best Standard: Carolina Elegant Affair; Best Gesneriad: *xachimenantha* 'Northwood's Sunburst', **Pat Berilla**. Best Miniature: Optimara Little Moonstone, **Martha Bell**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 5b clone *grotei* Silvert, **Kay Richards**. Best Design, **Penny Johnson**.

WINDSOR AVS, CT – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Molokai, Optimara Centennial, Cactus Rose, **Charlotte Howson**. Best in Show/Best Standard: Fancy Free; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Outer Orbit; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Doreen Lay**. Best Miniature: Rob's Chilly Willy, **Ann-Marie Keene**. Best Trailer: Rob's Galiwinku; Best Design, **Cindy Fagan**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha*, **Gloria Cooke**. Design Sweepstakes, **Nancy Hayes**.

Tinari Endowment Fund

When the AVSA Board of Directors established the Tinari Endowment Fund to honor Anne and Frank Tinari, it was for the purpose of future financial security for AVSA. It was stipulated that only the interest could be used, and then only after the fund reached \$100,000. The fund now has a balance of over \$77,000. An anonymous donor, in an effort to reach the \$100,000 goal and allow AVSA to use the interest for operating expenses, has challenged

the Society to raise \$15,000. He, or she, will then donate \$15,000, and push the balance over the goal. There is no time limitation, just the dollar amount. So, whenever a donation is made, the value will be doubled. Donations should be sent to:

Janet Riemer
Tinari Endowment Fund Chairman
256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd.
Pennington, NJ 08534

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

Janet Riemer • 256 Pennington-Harbourton Rd., Pennington, NJ 08534

Donations received from: April 29, 2014 - June 30, 2014



Two-Tone

Anne Nicholas
Patricia Miklica
Wendy Tooker

PRE-CONVENTION

Total this period: \$27.00



Geneva

Joan Santino
Deborah McInnis
Violet Reflections Yahoo Group
In memory of Janice Bruns
Nancy Hayes & Kathleen
In honor of Bill Price
Marge Savage

CHALLENGE

Missouri AV Council

In memory of Jackie Jones



Multicolor

Edna Rourke
Tristate AV Council (NJ)

In memory of Fred Hill



Two-tone

Tristate AV Council (NJ)
In memory of deceased members
Trudy Brekel



Thumbprint

Suet Lai Yeung Rosetta

Total this period: \$1,112



Potting Mix – what to use instead of Peat Moss?

By Ruth Coulson

From her Newsletter, "The African Violet Way"

For a lot of African violet growers, high quality sphagnum moss has long been the material of choice as a basis of their potting mix. It is gathered from peat bogs around the world: places like Ireland, Germany, Canada, Russia and the Netherlands. There has been a wide discussion for some years now about just how long it will continue to be available.

Peat bogs are wildlife habitats and purify and store water, as well as together forming the world's largest carbon "sink." The destruction of peat bogs is likely contributing to climate change. Not only is supply becoming a problem in many places, but there is also a definite movement to conserve what peat bogs exist. Regeneration of already-mined peat bogs is very slow.

Quality sphagnum peat moss is becoming difficult to access already, so some growers are phasing out its use. The problem is to find the best substitute. Peat moss has been used in potting mixes because of its ability to hold a lot of moisture making it available to roots over a long period. It also decays very slowly. Any substitute has to have at least these two advantages.

If you make up your own potting mix you might have already decided on an alternative.

I first became interested in looking for a peat substitute about twenty years ago. I acquired several different materials by gift and purchase. They included: coir, bark fines, rice hulls, garden compost, 50/50 perlite and vermiculite and a commercial mix.

The experimenting I did twenty years ago was inconclusive, partly because it is difficult to work with a large enough sample in limited accommodation. For what it is worth here are my conclusions.

Coir – Now used in many commercial mixes and by quite a few hobby growers, this is the ground fiber from coconut husks. It did very badly in my experiment. The plants suffered a lot of salt encrustation early on and even when they outgrew that, they never thrived, remaining

smaller than others, with pale leaves and no flowers. Where I used half-coir and half-garden compost to substitute for peat moss, the results were much better.

Some years later I purchased a different brand of coir and tried that with good results. I was most successful when I substituted just half the peat moss for the coir. I used this mix for a couple of years, but when that brand became unavailable and I had a bad experience with another one, I just never went back to coir. I do know of at least one grower who uses coir as a full substitute for peat moss with spectacular results. I think I may give it another try sometime.

Bark fines – Sold to me by an orchid nurseryman who found it a satisfactory substitute for peat moss in his nursery. The size of the granules was 3-4mm. At first I thought this couldn't possibly work, as it looked more like something you would use for aeration rather than water holding, but I mixed it up as a complete substitute for peat moss. It was initially difficult to wet but eventually plants grew on quite well, although never growing as large and lush as some other mixes. The mix did appear to hold sufficient moisture, but the roots only grew over part of the mix in the pots, although they appeared healthy enough. I decided this was not a product for me to use for growing African violets although it may be good for outdoor plants.

Rice hulls – I was given a bale of these to try as a peat moss alternative, although once again I was inclined to think they looked more likely to lighten the mix rather than improve its water holding capacity. I tried it as a full substitute for peat moss. The plants suffered a lot of salt encrustation early and just got worse over time. After four months, they were just starting to grow but were discarded at that point. The roots were weak and only through part of the pots. At that stage they were discarded. I later used the rice hulls to help the clay soil in my garden.

Garden compost is, I believe, a viable option.

Early in my growing career, I could not justify the expense of peat moss so I used the composted leaves from my oak trees instead. As the years went on, I added lawn clippings and other garden waste to the compost. I found a very satisfactory compromise was to use only half the amount of peat moss normally used and half of garden compost. The plants did grow very well. In fact, if I had somewhere to create the compost, I would use it still.

In this trial I used the compost in various ways. As mentioned above, I substituted the peat moss with half coir and half compost. This produced reasonable plants with some buds appearing in 3-4 months.

I made a mix of just compost and perlite with a little charcoal. The result of this was good, the plants having large, strong, rich green leaves, even symmetrical growth and buds also appearing in 3-4 months.

I even made a mix of 4 parts of compost and 3 parts of fine aquarium gravel. This produced good plants with rich green leaves and strong roots. Once again, buds appeared in around 3-4 months.

The result of using garden compost:



This is an old photograph—taken in 1986. It does illustrate that the plants I was growing then—using large quantities of garden compost in the mix did grow quite well. I was usually pleased with the results and would willingly go back to this sort of mix.

When I completely substituted compost for peat moss I also had good results, the plants having strong flexible leaves, even growth pattern, and healthy roots.

Note: In making potting mix for African violets, I cooked the compost in the oven for an hour in an effort to eradicate damaging organisms and any weed seeds.

Commercial mix – I tried a well-known and widely available mix. I will not name the manufacturer, as I don't believe this is the composition of their current product. It was sold labeled "African Violet Mix." I understand the components were: crushed pine bark (55%), hardwood sawdust (20%), river gravel (15%) and brown coal (10%).

This mix wasn't as bad as I expected. The plants didn't grow as large as I believed they should, and the outside leaves were a little pale. The other leaves were of a healthy color, but much smaller than expected. A few tiny buds appeared after four months.

I also tried using the commercial mix as a substitute for peat, adding perlite and vermiculite to it. The result of that was no better than using the commercial mix straight, and in fact actually a bit worse.

I therefore decided commercial mixes were not for me. Perhaps if no other mix were available I would use such a mix again.

More recently, I have become aware of a material called **diatomite**. This, and similar products (think cat litter), have been used by some growers.

It clearly holds a lot of moisture, but as I haven't trialed this myself, I cannot judge. I also know of at least one African violet grower who used **vermicompost** (the compost generated from a worm farm) as a basis for potting mix. In the case of the vermicompost, I was told that it is very high in nutrients and can cause burn to the roots and the center leaves of an African violet. One would therefore use it in only a small proportion in the potting mix. I have seen 10% to 20% recommended. It may be more useful as a fertilizer additive than a substitute for peat moss.

I have even read of using coffee grounds or tea leaves as the basis for a potting mix. I would never drink enough coffee or tea to have the requisite spent leaves and grounds to even think of making this experiment, so I have no way of knowing its value. I suspect it would be best used as an additive, rather than as the base material.

Another grower told me he believed it perfectly

possible to grow quality violets using just perlite and vermiculite, so I tried using that also. My results were inconclusive. The plants were good initially, but did not fully develop in the way I like. After four months, they were smaller than expected, the outer leaves a little pale, and had roots that did not develop through the whole pot. Buds were being produced freely, though. I felt that I could use this to grow in if necessary.

My normal potting mix turned out to be what I really preferred, which, at that time had the following composition:

Compost – 7 parts, peat moss – 6 parts, perlite – 6 parts, vermiculite – 6 parts and charcoal 2 parts, and I persisted with that until after moving house I had no more compost.

These days I use a mix with just peat moss, perlite, and vermiculite, with a little charcoal.

What would I use, if I have to substitute something else for the peat moss in my mix? On previous experience I would definitely choose garden compost. Failing that, coir would be my choice. I haven't heard terribly good reports of diatomite (Diatomaceous earth) for growing African violets, but perhaps that should be my next trial. Whichever way I choose, I do know that eventually I am unlikely to be using sphagnum peat moss.

If you are interested in the problems caused by using peat moss, you might like to read the following article:

Linda Chalker-Scott, Ph.D., Extension Urban Horticulturist and Associate Professor, Puyallup Research and Extension Center, Washington State University - "*The Myth of Permanent Peatlands*"



For African Violets to Bloom Well, Several Things are Needed

By by Joyce Stork

From the AVSA Website FAQ Section

1) It must receive adequate light. African violets prefer to be within twelve inches of a bright window or twelve inches away from a fluorescent light unit that is turned on for twelve hours a day. If it isn't getting enough light, the leaves will usually reach upward.

2) It must be fertilized regularly with a balanced mix for African violets. There are many good brands.

3) African violets bloom best when in small pots, ideally only one-third the diameter of their leaves. A plant that measures nine inches across should be in a three-inch pot.

4) African violets bloom best when the roots are well-developed. The best roots form in very porous potting mix that is kept evenly moist at all times, never saturated, and never bone dry. We recommend a mix that is equal parts of sphagnum peat moss, vermiculite, and perlite.

5) If the air is very dry, the flower buds may be drying off before they are even visible. Humidity levels of 40% are ideal. Check also to see if a vent might be blowing dry air across the surface of the plant.

6) Some African violets become vegetative, meaning they are so comfortable that they only grow leaves. To convert them to being reproductive, you must give them a little scare. Repotting is one method. It also works to tap the pot firmly on a hard surface to create a minor earthquake. This seems to cause the plant to awaken the survival-of-the-species instinct and it will often set buds.

7) Some varieties are shy bloomers. If you have tried all of these techniques and it still does not bloom, discard it, and try again with a different variety that may be more suited to your conditions.

BOYCE EDENS RESEARCH FUND

Marlene Buck • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958
Donations received from April 1, 2014 - May 31, 2014 Total = \$ 94.00

Thumbprint

African Violet Club of Burlington County, NJ

In lieu of judges fee for Betsy Branson

African Violet Club of Morris County, NJ

In lieu of judges travel expenses for

Stephanie Griffith & Marianne Gershon



Alice A Inlow, Ballwin, MO

Susan E Joy, Pickerington, OH

Robert McMeel, Houma, LA

Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA

Lynn Wallach, Westport, CT

Mary Vasconcelles, Springfield, IL

AVSA BOOSTER FUND

Shirley Berger, 2822 S. Mainsail Dr. Avon Park, FL 33825-6032

Donations received May 1 - June 30, 2014 TOTAL: \$429.00



Geneva

Marge Farrand, Ann Arbor, MI



Multicolor

African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa,
Tulsa, Okla.

Shirley Berger, Avon Park, FL

In memory of dear friend Katie McGraw

Trudy Brekel, Brighton, CO.



Two-tone

First Nighter African Violet Society,
Dallas, Texas

First Nighter African Violet Society, Dallas,
Texas

In memory of Glenn Pate's father

Richman African Violet Society, Richman, Va.

*In lieu of judges' expenses for Pat Knight
and Carol Van*



Thumbprint

Susan E Arnao, Mount Laurel, NJ

Wai Bun Chan, Hong Kong, China

Mrs M. Fasullo, Lynbrook, NY

Dawn Kliarsky, Saint George, UT

Long Island African Violet Society, NY

Patricia Malica, San Jose, CA

Janice Murray, New York, NY

Suet Lai Yeung Rosetta, Hong Kong, China

Ann Shubert, Sandia Park, NM

Janice Sorensen, Centennial, CO

AVSA - Building Maintenance Fund

Susan Hapner - Chairman • 35 Ridge Point Dr. - Chesterfield, MO 63017

Building Maintenance Fund 16 May 2014 to 31 July 2014



Two-tone

Terry Klemesrud
Meredith Hall



Thumbprint

Edith Martin
Patricia Miklica
Robin Murray

Marvin Nester

Ida Bushkuhl

Glenn Hodges

Debra Black

Wai Bun Chan

Suet Lai Yeung Rosetta

Pamela Morgan

Reginald Arrington



Geneva

Correction from Previous Report

First Austin AVS

In lieu of judges fees for:

Sue Ramser, Mary McFarland, Vickie Crieder,

Irene Harney, Ruth Goeke, Ken Frobese



Multicolor

AVS of Greater Tulsa

TOTALS \$196.00

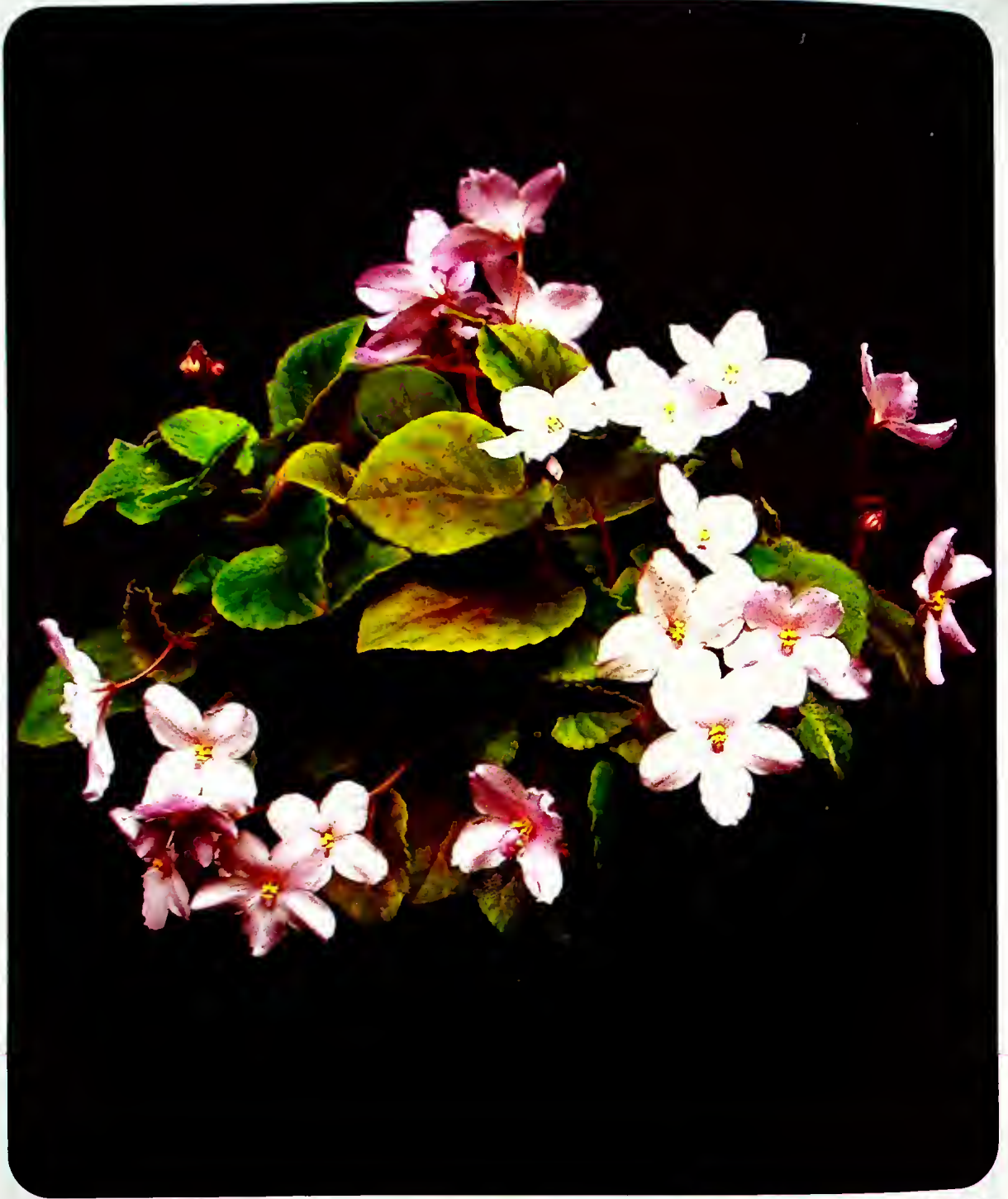


Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Mountain Mist Trail

Exhibited by: Claire Ulanoff

Hybridized by: L. Lyon

Standard Trailer



***Streptocarpus
'Heartland's
Baby Kisses'***

Exhibited by:

Lousie McPherson

Hybridized by:

D. Martens

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

***Rob's
Galiwinku***

Exhibited by:

Lacera DeWilde

Hybridized by:

R. Robinson

Semiminiature Trailer



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Lost and Found

By Diane Miller

My story starts at the Nashville convention back in May when a bag of sinningias I purchased from David Harris got lost. I have been going to convention for many years and I just couldn't believe that any of the violet people I knew would not return a bag of seven sinningias. Think how you would feel if you lost any of your violet babies or their cousins! It was my fault, however, for not putting my name on the bag.

I had been helping Pat Hancock sell plants in the convention sales room and thought I had left the bag under her sales tables. When I went back to look, I could not find them. There must have been 15-20 bags under Pat's table with various names on them none of which were mine. Leaving the convention this year made me feel very sad thinking that someone would be enjoying my sinningias more than I. Upon hearing my sinningia saga, my good friend Darryl Hoover said, "I will find the culprit who took your sinningias." A day later the mystery was solved thanks to the value of social media. Pat found them and had asked Mel Grice if the sinningias were his. Debbie McInnis overheard the conversation between Pat and Mel and had seen Darryl's post for the missing sinningias on Facebook...mystery solved thanks to all of my super-sleuth violet friends. Part one had a happy ending.

The second part of the story has an educational purpose. Most all sinningias grow from a tuber, a storage unit that allows the plant to with-

stand periods of less-than-favorable conditions—cold, drought, etc. Plants will flower followed by a decline and eventually a dormant period. Repeating the cycle is part of the beauty of sinningias. Each time they "die back," they grow back even more beautifully than before. So many inexperienced growers think that once the foliage dies, it is time to toss the plant. Check the tuber to see if it is still viable. By that I mean check to see if the tuber has rotted, possibly from over watering or that it has shriveled due to lack of water. Sinningias, like our violets, do not tolerate a cycle of "swamp-arid" conditions. They need to be kept evenly moist but not so wet as to rot the tuber. Also, remember to water with tepid water to avoid shock to the plant.

Knowing the cost of shipping these days, I didn't want to ask Pat to pack and mail my sinningias back to me. The pot and the soil just add unnecessary weight. I asked her if she would just cut the tops off, remove the soil, and send me the tuber. Two days later, I got a small box in the mail with seven very healthy little tubers, which have now been potted into their new pots in their new environment.

Nashville was great, I have wonderful violet friends, and I am already looking forward to the national convention in 2015. Who knows, one of those sinningia tubers just might develop into a specimen fit for display in the Kansas City show.

In Memory

Aloha Rhodes

Aloha Rhodes passed away on November 13th, 2013, at the age of 91. After spending thirty years traveling the world as a navy nurse and obtaining the rank of Colonel, she and her husband retired in Austin, Texas.

Shortly thereafter she joined the First Austin

AVS. She held several offices and in 1984 became President, growing and showing many award-winning African violets. Aloha was a member of the Central Texas Judges Council and was a Master judge. Her failing health in the last few years kept her from attending the convention she so loved, but she continued to contribute awards to the societies.

Online Giving

By John Carter, AVSA President

As your President, I try to monitor what similar horticulture organizations are doing, and I also get a couple of online newsletters relating to nonprofit organizations. All of these organizations depend upon donations to some extent. Within the horticulture organizations most of the donations come from the membership. This is also true within AVSA.

Donations to AVSA come in many forms. At convention, we saw numerous donations of items for the Luncheon Auction, Ways and Means, and the Kansas City Convention tables. These donations are greatly appreciated and result in funds to AVSA that helps us continue our services to our members.

Donations are also sent to the Building Fund and Booster Fund Committees. Funds received by the Building Fund Committee are used to cover expenses incurred in making repairs to the AVSA office building that come up due to the age of the facility. At this time, Amy has a list of repairs needed to correct lighting and plumbing problems. The outside of the building also needs to be power washed to clean off the mold and mildew that forms on siding in that part of the country. The entry ramp at the back of the building has seen too much weather and also needs to be replaced.

The Booster Fund has been helpful in funding computer purchases and appliances or machines needed in the office. At this time we need to upgrade the software on Amy's computer and the server. You have probably read where Microsoft no longer supports Windows XP, which is currently being used. It is not as expensive as a new computer but will cost several hundred dollars for license and installation.

You are probably thinking that all of this does not have anything to do with online giving. Well, donations to these funds as well as the Tinari Fund may be made online through our website. A simple click will bring up the page to allow you to make your donation. You can make it in honor of, or in memory of someone, if you wish. It is possible to make donations to multiple funds at the same time if you wish. You will receive an immediate receipt

listing the donations that you have made. A copy of this receipt will be sent to the appropriate committee chairs so they will have the information to report in the AVM and can send tax receipts if applicable. You can make your donation in less time than it would take you to address an envelope and you have a receipt to document your donation.

Convenience comes with a cost. All credit card transactions incur a cost to AVSA. This is true for donations as well as purchases. If you make a one hundred dollar donation, AVSA will have a little over ninety-seven dollars deposited in our checking account. The fund you donated to will receive credit for the one hundred dollars with the credit card cost being charged as an office operating expense. The bottom line is that AVSA does not benefit from the full donation. However, don't let this keep you from using the convenience of online giving. If you wish to help with this expense, make your donation for \$103 and AVSA will receive the full \$100, and you have paid the credit card cost.

The use of online giving is increasing every month. There are companies specializing in processing donations to nonprofit organizations. Their costs are less than a regular credit card company but our level of donations are not sufficient to use their services yet. Giving online is now as secure as using your credit card at a retail merchant location. Some credit cards will guarantee that you will not incur any invalid online charges.

I recognize that many affiliates that donate do not have credit or debit cards and cannot make online donations. There are others that prefer checks as the method of payment. Your check will always be welcome by any of the committees receiving donations or by our AVSA Officer Manager, Amy Caruth, in the office. Your donations are important to AVSA. We have needs that they will fill. Remember that AVSA is recognized as a 501.c.3 organization by the IRS, so your donations will generally be tax deductible. You should consult your tax preparer at time of filing. Thank you for your donations, past, present, and future!



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Optimara Little Maya

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis

Hybridized by: Holtkamp

Semiminiature

Kansas City 2015 Convention

Specific Awards

We wish you a fun and exciting trip to the 2015 AVSA Convention in Kansas City, MO where you will enjoy lots of "jazz, blues, and barbeque." Here is the list of Specific Variety and Collection Awards donated so far for the 2015 convention show. The awards that we give are important because they encourage people to show their plants and they serve as a reward for their hard work. We would especially like to invite those who are members residing in the Missouri/Kansas area and surrounding states to talk with your club members and donate one or two awards for this convention which will be held in your area. All awards will be listed in the convention book. Many thanks go to those members and affiliates who make our awards possible through their donations and we encourage each of you to consider giving an award.

To be part of this convention effort, please send your awards (payable to **AVSA** in U.S. funds) to:
Judith Carter, AVSA Awards Chair
1825 W. Lincoln St.
Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509
Email: awards@avsa.org

The deadline to be included on the Jan/Feb AVM Awards page is October 15th, 2014. Please include an email address or telephone contact.

Specific Variety Awards

Best Concord - \$100 - Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)
Best The Alps - \$100 - Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)
Best Everdina - \$50 - Hans Inpijn (CA)
Best Del's Spring Blush - \$50 - Violet Reflections Yahoo Group (IN)
Best Jolly Jan - \$100 - Joe Bruns (IL)
Best Lonestar Helen Mahr - \$25 - Richard & Anne Nicholas (TX)
Best Lonestar Twilight - \$25 - Richard & Anne Nicholas (TX)
Best Rodeo Country - \$75 - Spring Branch AVC (TX)
Best Tina (Maas) - \$25 - Janet Riemer (NJ)
Best Happy Cricket - \$10 - Town & Country AVS (OH)

Best Ozark Sinningia \$35 - David Harris (MO)

Amateur Collection Awards

Best Holtkamp Collection \$300/coin - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
2nd Best Holtkamp Collection \$200 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
3rd Best Holtkamp Collection \$100 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
Best Lyon's Greenhouse Collection \$200 - Paul Sorano (NY)
2nd Best Lyon's Greenhouse Collection \$100 - Paul Sorano (NY)
Best Robinson Collection \$200 - Ralph & Olive Ma Robinson (NY)
2nd Best Robinson Collection \$100 - Ralph & Olive Ma Robinson (NY)
Best Buckeye Collection \$200 - Pat Hancock (OH)
2nd Best Buckeye Collection \$100 - Pat Hancock (OH)
Best Russian Hybrid Collection \$300 - Vladimir & Tatiana Kalgin (Moscow, Russia)
2nd Best Russian Hybrid Collection \$200 - Vladimir & Tatiana Kalgin (Moscow, Russia)
3rd Best Russian Hybrid Collection \$100 - Vladimir & Tatiana Kalgin (Moscow, Russia)

Commercial Collection Awards

Best Holtkamp Collection \$300 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
2nd Best Holtkamp Collection \$200 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)
3rd Best Holtkamp Collection \$100 - Holtkamp Greenhouses (TN)

This listing has only Specific Variety and Collection Awards. For all current awards, go to www.AVSA.org. A full awards list will appear in the January/February AVM.

Specific variety awards for Kansas City have closed. They are now being accepted for the 2016 AVSA Convention.

The 7 Deadly Sins of Growing Violets

What they are and how to avoid them

I never had to make a disclaimer before in any of my articles, so this will be the first time. The ideas expressed here are my opinion after thirty-years of growing, and I know some may disagree, so here goes. I'm seeing growers repeatedly make the same mistakes over and over. After taking a poll on one of the social media sites, I figured it was time to spell out the clear and present dangers that we face as growers. Here they are in their order of importance:

Thrips

Not stopping thrips is one sin that can wipe out your entire collection. It is the Western Flower Thrips, which is the only one out of 5,000 thrips species that can spread INSV and other viruses. They are spread from grower to grower, from a seller, or from a show (especially). 98% of the United States have times during the dead of winter when the temperature drops below 40 degrees, even for a short period of time. When this occurs, WFT die. There are only a few spots like the Florida Keys, that usually stay above 40°F, even during winter, but the vast majority of the US just cannot sustain WFT outdoor survival. They are the only way you can get INSV. Period. Growers are afraid of tools spreading thrips, mites, you name it. I spent over a month contacting the top phytopathologists, and every one of them said the WFT is the ONLY way the INSV spreads.

Thrips do not go into diapaus, which is long term suspended animation. If you cut off their food supply, which is pollen, in eight weeks, they will die. Other species of thrips can, and will, come from the outdoors, but THEY WILL NOT SPREAD INSV. And don't believe you can "control" thrips. Only one is needed for asexual reproduction.



Trying to control thrips means spraying over and over, which can cause them to acclimate to the pesticide. You DO NOT want this to happen. I wrote a comprehensive article on this subject in Nov-Dec. 2013 AVM, and will continue to update the information as it occurs.

The method that works best for me is to isolate and spray the plants you bring into your home, especially from a show, commercial grower, or another source. Disbud for eight weeks, and you can skip the spraying option. However, spraying is excellent insurance and I always spray. When you disbud, get every single tiny bud off, as thrips are known to burrow deep into the buds, and then the whole cycle starts over. They can only live in the leaves for two weeks, and no more. They are NOT indestructible. It does take patience, however, and too many growers cannot bear to be without blooms for the eight-week period. When you disbud, the plant then forces more blooms, so you will have your work cut out for you.

Minimize Variables

This is a major sin and throws a monkey wrench into your growing. You'll never know what caused your plants to suddenly act up. These variables include lighting, temperature, humidity, soil, water, and fertilizer. Go with the tried-and-true methods, and see how the plants grow. If you want to make changes, make them one by one, or you'll never know what culprit caused your problems.

Many of these changes can occur when you are unaware. Most water companies keep their water within certain limits. But going from one extreme to the other can complicate your growing quite a bit. Changing from GroLux lamps to F40CW lamps

will affect the plants, too. Even temperature variations, which many of us growers can do little about, could change everything.

Humidity can and will change, from season to season. When our local show moved up its show date from May 1 to April 1, and we had a cold winter, this really caused problems with the club members' plants.

Growing More Plants than You Can Manage

I personally know how hard it is to limit the number of the plants you grow. The reason why is that for every special plant you have, you really need a backup or two, especially if, like me, you grow many chimeras, especially the rare ones. There are things you can do to alleviate this problem, and some of these ideas may rub you the wrong way.

I always give extra plants away to other growers, so I have a backup. If you don't want a club member competing with you, then give it to someone from another club, but make sure that others have the plant. It's a running joke between award-winning grower, Paula Bal, and I that when she kills one of these chimeras, I give her one, and vice versa. You see, when the conditions are wrong, all of your chimeras can revert at the same time, and this has happened to me on more than one occasion.

The next idea is a little crazy, but it works for me. I have a few shelves of plants that are my "backup" plants, which are not 'show ready. What I will do is pull off some of the leaves and "cram" them together, just so I have an extra to "extract" and revive, to replace another lost plant. You can squeeze nine plants in the space of one standard and then use it to "grow out" to get you out of a jam, and you will have a full replacement with proper care. To reduce the work even further, I'll put a dome over it and leave it basically unattended. It's only a backup, and you may be fine with losing a plant here and there.

Water Problems

This includes hard water, well water, high or low pH problems, and chloramines, to name a few. If there is any way to collect rain water and store

it, this would solve the problem on the spot. If not, considering installing resin filters and reverse osmosis. Testing your water is free from the kits at Lowes and Home Depot. There's no excuse for going blind on this. One grower I know had water tested a really high pH, but their soil was equally low pH, and low and behold, she had perfectly growing plants. This grower won over 50% of the rosettes at her show including Best in Show.

The best way to tell if your water is a problem, is to use distilled water on the difficult plants. Only change the water and nothing else. If the plant suddenly revives, you now know where to start. You only need to buy a gallon or two until you see results.

Lighting Problems

Many growers assume that if something new comes into the market, like T5 lamps and LEDS, it has to be good. Unless you're a lighting engineer, WATCH OUT. You could fry your plants and they'll never look the same. Wait until someone tests these scenarios over time before you make big changes to your lighting. The tried and true method is using F40 4-foot lamps (T8 or T12) about ten-inches from the top of the plant, lit about ten hours a day.

T5 lamps can put out up to 40% more light, and if you wick water, you won't have the room to raise the lamps thirteen to fifteen inches from the plants. Even if you do, most of the light will spill over the edge of the trays, wasting more than what you're saving. If you already have T5 lamps, you can try cutting back the hours and/or raising the fixtures a couple of inches higher. Another point that you must consider is whether the lamp is an HO lamp, (high output). Some of the T-5's are like this, and it will complicate your growing techniques.

A second aspect of lighting problems is when the spectral analysis (the different color bands) are too strong in one part and not strong enough elsewhere. Violets grow best with a certain spectrum, red for bloom and blue for growth. This is why growing with LEDS is so difficult. Every LED lamp has a different spectrum, and too much of this and too little of that can cause many violets

to throw in the towel. Yes, if you're experienced and you know how to balance them, you can get good results, but this requires some heavy engineering calculations.

Soil Problems

I see growers change their type of soil every year or more, many not knowingly, as the manufacturers will make changes to their formulations. I stick to my 4-part mix of vermiculite, peat moss, perlite, and regular Baccto (NOT Baccto lite), and buffer with dolomite lime. This formula has never failed me. Just watch out for the premixed soils from companies that can, and will, suddenly change their content, with no warning at all. Read carefully the amount of fertilizer added to any soil, but keep in mind it only is 25% of the mixture. I buffer the soil to be about pH of 6.8 and let it "drift" down. You can use the soil immediately and don't have to wait for it to stabilize.

Many parts of the country do not have Baccto available, so use any "pure" soil, no additional fertilizer, if possible, and look for a company that does not make yearly changes to the formulation.

Sphagnum will turn acidic slowly which causes the drop. Some of the soils have a pH much higher and lower, and you don't know what is going on when you get poor growth or fertilizer lockup.

Remember that wicking needs a lighter mix, and lighter concentrations of fertilizer and pesticides. Always pour off excess and DO NOT let the plant sit in the treated water.

Fertilizer Issues

Most fertilizer problems are usually caused by giving too much of it to the plants. I measure with a 1/8 tsp measure, and level off the top for one gallon of water, for top watering only. If you well-water or wick, you must at least cut that in half. I do not change to a blooming fertilizer, and just stick to Plant Marvel 14-12-14 all year long. To get really bright blooms you need a high potas-

sium level (the last letter in NPK). There are some violets, like 'Sugar n' Spice' that need 5-50-17, which I discovered by accident, but that is the exception.

Joyce Stork said the following about trace elements in my Fertilizer article in AVM around May, 2013, and it needs to be restated again:

Toxic levels of one or more of the micro-nutrients (sometimes called trace elements) in fertilizer can cause stunting. In this case, a large standard plant might suddenly have a center that looks perfectly miniaturized with a large gap between the big outer leaves and the very petite center leaves. This is the result of a toxic build-up of the micro-nutrient, and appears to be irreversible once it reaches this stage. It happens most commonly when the minerals in the water are already providing the needed nutrient... the addition of fertilizer adds a second dose and it quickly becomes too much. Occasionally the water pH level allows too much of the micro-nutrient to be absorbed and correcting the pH can prevent further problems.

In conclusion, I must emphasize the need to get rid of thrips, even if you live in the south, where they never seem to go away. But diligence, and keeping your growing room away from an outside door or open window, can do wonders.

One last "sin" is not keeping your soil in the 6.3 - 6.8 range. A little higher is fine because of the downward "drift" of pH, but try to avoid going lower than 6.3. Most fertilizers only work in this small range, and you want the maximum bang-for-the-buck from your fertilizer.

I would like to thank Carolee Carter for her proofreading and other general tips and improvements.

Neil Lipson is a full-time computer consultant. He can be reached by emailing him at ndlipson@gmail.com or calling 610-356-6183 after 1pm Eastern time. He will return your call.





Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Buckeye Cherry Topping

Exhibited by: Sandra Skalski

Hybridized by: P. Hancock

Large

MAKE FERTILIZER YOUR FRIEND

Claire O'Shea

It is astounding how many people complain that their African violets don't flower and, upon being asked whether they feed their plants, reply "Well, I water them!" They are dumbfounded. It never occurred to them to feed their plants as well!

Our garden soil may contain naturally occurring elements and fertilizers, but we grow our African violets in a soilless, sterile potting mix so these are missing, or are washed away by constant watering. Our plants will eventually starve.

Fertilization can be a complex scientific subject and difficult to understand. Some growers like to make up their own recipes and go into the area in depth. I am neither a commercial grower nor have the scientific background to confidently do this. I am a hobby grower who hopes to grow healthy, flowering plants, and maybe win a few ribbons in the Annual Show, have fun propagating, and perhaps sell a few spares along the way. I don't have time for mucking about, and find that those fertilizers commercially available do their job just fine.

Pick up just about any packet of fertilizer and you will notice on the back a list of ingredients and a bunch of numbers. The numbers merely relate to the percentage of that element contained in that particular fertilizer. Instead let's look at what the particular elements do, and when you might need more of one or another.

Remember back in high school science lessons, when you had to learn about the Periodic Table of Elements and the Chemical Symbols?

The three main elements contained in most fertilizers are expressed as N.P.K. **Nitrogen** (chemical symbol 'N'), **Phosphorus** (P) and **Potassium** (K). These are sometimes listed in bold print. Most fertilizers contain all three and are termed 'Complete Fertilizers'.

Plants need plenty of Nitrogen (N) to form proteins and enzymes for plant cells to live and reproduce. It is the necessary part of the green

pigment Chlorophyll. It is essential to good stem and leaf growth. Deficiency causes stunted growth and pale green/yellow leaves, sometimes showing a reddish tint.

Phosphorus (P) forms part of the nucleoproteins in plant cells and is important in growing tissue where cells are actively dividing. Phosphorus promotes development of seedlings, root growth, flowering, and the formation of fruits and seeds. Deficiency is displayed by poor root development, stunted growth and often a purplish discoloration of leaves.

Potassium (K) promotes chlorophyll formation and plays an important part in the strength of cells and the movement of water in plants. Potassium assists with disease resistance and improved quality of flowers, fruits, and seeds. Deficiency leads to weak stems, floppy (particularly in older) leaves with yellow/brown tips and scorched margins.



Here is a photograph of an experiment carried out on cabbages which illustrates the need for the addition of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.

This is a rather dramatic demonstration of the need for fertilizers. These cabbages are growing in sand. The cabbage on the right has had no fertilizer added to it, while the one at the far left has benefited from the provision of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. (*Yates Garden Guide* (Centennial Edition 1994) 39.)

Besides these three essential ingredients fertilizers also usually include 'Secondary Elements' namely, Calcium (Ca), Magnesium (Mg) and Sulfur (S), and 'Trace Elements', Iron (Fe), Manganese (Mn), Copper (Cu), Zinc (Zn), Boron (B), and Molybdenum (Mo). Our plants need all of these to function, and although some are required in tiny amounts they are, nevertheless, necessary for survival.

Now to look at those confusing numbers. The numbers shown tell you the percentage of the element present in the particular fertilizer. A higher number of, say, Nitrogen, than Phosphorus means that the particular fertilizer is geared towards encouraging the growth of leaves and stems rather than inducing flowering and vice-versa. So, you might want to use a fertilizer with a higher Nitrogen count on your baby plants, or those that are struggling to get going, to encourage quickened growth. You might then switch to a balanced N.P .K., or even a higher potassium count, to bring your plant to maturity, and then a higher phosphorus count (a 'bloom booster' or one for 'flowering plants') to promote and increase the production of flowers or seeds.

Just as humans need a balanced diet, it is unwise to keep your plants on a high nitrogen or high phosphorus diet for an overly long time. Too much nitrogen will cause the plants to grow soft and floppy and it likely will not flower. Too much phosphorus, and the plant will be exhausted by constant flower production.

I would here suggest caution with fertilizer use. We like to think of them as food but should really consider them as medicines. Too much will cause more problems than too little. Always use the recommended dose and, if in doubt, use a weakened dose. Baby plants, minis and semi-minis, and plants weakened by disease or 'major surgery' (i.e with an immature, smaller or reduced root system) will favor a diluted dose. You can always increase the strength, but cannot undo the damage caused by too much fertilizer. Fertilizer burn is exhibited by a 'burnt' look to the center of the plant, orange colored crystallization on the leaves or a crust of fertilizer salts around the rim of the pot. It is a good idea to

leach the pot with plain water every six weeks to flush out the build-up and repot regularly.

Never fertilize a dry plant. You will burn the roots. Rehydrate with plain water, leave for a day or two and then fertilize.

Growth slows in winter and if it is particularly hot therefore it is wise to use a diluted formula during these times. I wick-water all of my plants so if I am going to be on holiday for a week or more (and this includes shutting curtains and turning off heating) I replace all fertilized water in my reservoirs with plain water and the plants seem to do fine.

Because variegated plants contain less chlorophyll in their leaves their growth is much slower. You might want to feed them a higher nitrogen fertilizer to start with to give their growth a boost. They will lose some of their variegation. Once your plant has become established, replace the higher nitrogen fertilizer with a lower one to regain the variegation.

What about organic fertilizers? Our soilless mixes unfortunately do not contain the microbes that are necessary to break the organic matter down into the elements your plant can use so they may not be of huge benefit in the growing of African violets.

Ask your fellow growers what they use and recommend, however, don't run out and change all of your plants over to the new fertilizer immediately. I doubt that there ever will be a 'wonder fertilizer.' Remember that our violets also rely on light, warmth, water, and potting mix to grow, and other growers' conditions are unlikely to mirror your own. By all means, try a new solution, but on a few 'expendable' plants to start with. Also question whether your conditions could be improved. Of course, it isn't a bad idea to feed your plants a different fertilizer from time to time, even alternating them when you feed. Just establish which ones are successful for you first.

Indeed, most reputable gardening books, give a more detailed analysis of the subject, but I hope this article has demystified it a little.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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Make Your Violets Happy While You Travel!

By Sylvia A. Farnum, PhD
safarnum@aol.com

I suspect there are many of us African violet growers that are in the group of people that are retired. Back in 1992 and in 2008, I wrote articles for our magazine about how to maintain your violet collection after retirement, when you will be traveling for long periods of time.

Since then, my husband and I have extended our travel times to include two long trips each year, one in late August and September for five to six weeks, and a second in January and February for eight weeks. This coming year, our winter vacation will be extended to nine weeks. In summer, we also alternate our time, around ten days at our home, where we grow all of our violets, and ten days at our lake home 300 miles away. The result is that we are only at home to care for our plants about 50% of the time.

We have learned a lot during our twelve years of retirement about maintaining a moderately sized collection of African violets during the times when we are not at home to care for them.

We grow our plants on four lighted racks in our lower level plant room. We also grow a few on the counter top and in one window. My husband has a collection of *Nematanthus* on lighted shelves in the laundry room window. We have between 450 and 500 pots at a time.

Early Attempts:

The first year after retirement, I was very unsure whether plants could survive our first long trip. I cut leaves of some plants to start, and I cut the crowns out of some of the rest of the plants. I filled trays with layered charcoal, perlite, and finally, potting mix. I placed the crowns and leaves, all labeled with freezer tape attached directly to the plant or leaf, into the trays. I placed domes over the trays. For the rest of the plants, I used individual reservoirs and wicking. It was an enormous amount of work to prepare for the trip. We were only away a

few weeks that time, and I think I spent as much time restarting all of my violets as I did traveling.

That experience showed me that the plants on the individual reservoirs were in very good shape when we returned. So, the next year, I eliminated cutting crowns and extra leaves and started using wicking and reservoirs. As our trips got longer and longer, I started using community reservoirs and covering the plants with plastic. That has proved to be the easiest method and will keep plants for longer periods of time.

Present Method:

Our present method is about the same as I reported in 2008. I repot every plant in the late fall, usually in November. I use a light potting mix that is 50/50 commercial African violet potting mix and Perlite. I don't think that the pot size matters, as long as it is proportional to the size of the plant. I use everything from 1 ½ inch pots to 4-inch pots. Every pot is wicked with pre-soaked synthetic acrylic yarn.

Our light stands each hold sixteen 11 X 22 X 2 ½ inch trays. Each of the trays is fitted with a lightweight black tray of the same size. We buy the black trays at one of the box stores during gardening season. The black trays are inexpensive and can be replaced every couple of years.

In each of the black trays, we place white grids to hold the plants. They are the type of grid that is available at lumberyards as light grids in 4 X 8 ft size. My husband cuts them to a size that just fits inside the trays. He also cuts six strips of grid, about an inch wide and the length of the short side of the tray. We stack these strips, three at each end, to support the grids and make a reservoir for the wicking water. The grids may be cleaned by removing the black trays with their grids, and soaking them in bleach solution before reusing them. We do this each year when I am potting. My husband cleans the trays and scrubs pots for me.



Plants are covered with plastic

Each plant is potted in damp mix, and the pot is placed on the grid on a tray that is filled with water. I make sure that the wicks are making good contact with the water in the tray. It is best to make the wicks long enough so that they lay on the bottom of the tray. If they are too short, they can curl up, dry out, and your plant will be potted in a desert for eight or nine weeks. Then, I top water, to make sure that the plant has its wick started.

The plants are given about a month to get a good start before our longest trip. Since I repot before the end of November, they have the month of December to get established before our long winter trip. They will also be fine for our late summer trip. If you can repot more than once a year, that is even better.

Final Preparations:

The day before we leave for our long trips, we make sure all of the plants are disbudded and that the wicks are all running. We cover each shelf with a piece of thin painter's drop cloth plastic. *This is where things can get a little critical.* We cover the shelves, each has four trays, so that the plastic is laying directly on the plants. It is practically weightless, so damage to plant leaves is minimal. The light fixtures are outside of the plastic. For periods of time up to eight weeks, we have covered the shelves without sealing them in. We roll the plastic on the edges so that there is a small amount of air can get

under the plastic. For a four-week or five-week trip, the plastic can be loose. For our next nine-week trip, we may make the plastic tighter, seal-



Plants are placed on grids in trays

ing in more moisture to last longer.

I set the automatic timers for our fluorescent lights on the racks at about nine hours. Our plant room is about the same temperature year round, between 65 and 70 degrees.

Occasionally, if the soil mix is a little heavy, or a plant hasn't been transplanted recently, I will lose a plant or two to root rot under these conditions. So, as insurance, it is best to grow a duplicate of each plant. I place the duplicates on different racks. If you don't have duplicate plants, it is easy to cut a leaf or two and start them in an extra tray as insurance. If a wick fails and a plant is dry for most of the time, it is surprising that most plants will survive, especially if they are surrounded by other plants that are wet enough. But, in case there is a problem, the extra plant, or started leaf, will be your backup.

Choosing the Best Method for Your Plants:

If your trip is for ten days to two weeks, depending on your plant room conditions, wicking over a reservoir may be enough to keep your plants happy, even without the plastic cover. Or, alternatively, if you are going to be away for two to three weeks, you may be able to water your plants and cover them with the thin plastic, without the water reservoir. One thing you should remember, is that covering plants with plastic should never be done if you grow your plants in natural

light. You could easily cook your plants from the greenhouse heating effect of sunlight on the plastic. If you need to cover them, be sure they are out of direct sunlight.

You will have to take the temperature in the area where you grow your plants into consideration. If it is going to be warm, you may want to set your light timers for shorter hours and have them on at night, when the room temperature may be cooler.

You may be able to have a fellow violet grower come into your growing area to check on your plants once or twice while you are away. If this is a possibility, you can make a list of things to check and leave it for them to use as reference. In this age of cell phones, they could also call you to ask questions, if there is a problem.

Test the Method You Choose

If you plan to make a short or long trip, the method you choose for your violets will vary and will depend on the time of year and conditions in the area where you grow your plants. You may want to set up a wicking situation for a few of your plants and test their response to it before you leave.

If you decide you will be away ten days to two weeks, you may wish to set a few of your plants up with their wicks running and watch them for two weeks before you leave, to see how long the water in the reservoir lasts, and how the plants respond. Then, you can tell whether covering the plants in plastic is necessary or not.

Or, you can just water some of your plants, without wicking them over a reservoir, and cover them in plastic for a time equal to the time you will be away. That will also tell you how your plan will work.

If you only have a few plants, wicking each plant over a reservoir made of a recycled butter tub or similar container from the party store, covering with a plastic bag, or not covering them, can work as well as using a reservoir tray. For longer trips, using a method similar to our "long trip method" should preserve your violet collection, if you take proper care.

Results: What to Expect

When you return after being away four-eight weeks, you will find your plants budded and blooming under their plastic covers. The water in

the reservoirs will be used up in eight-nine weeks, if the temperature is below 70°F in your plant room. Violets respond well to the increased humidity and will bloom in that time period. If you had not removed the blossoms or buds, the plants would have bloomed too early, and the blossoms would have rotted right through the leaves, sometimes even causing the crown to rot, damaging or killing the plants.

You will also find that your plants have grown somewhat wildly when you return. Sometimes, an opportunistic plant will grow giant leaves during eight unsupervised weeks, attempting to take over the world. Most plants may need extensive grooming, and a few may be water-spotted from condensate. It is fun to see what they have been up to while you were away!



Uncovering plants after a long trip

In the twelve years we have been traveling and covering our plants like this during our trips, we have only had one real problem. That happened last January and February. When we returned home around the first of March, one rack had plants that were in terrible shape. I discovered that my husband had been covering the shelves the night before we left, and the timer had already turned the lights off. He removed the light plug for the rack from the timer and plugged it into the wall. He forgot to replace the plug in the timer and the lights were on for eight weeks, 24/7. To make matters worse, he forgot to close the door to the lower living room, which is next to that plant rack. There was too much heat entering the plant room, and the plants on that rack dried

out and were horribly sunburned. So, it is good to double check before you leave! Since I lost quite a few plants on that rack, I was happy that my duplicate plants were all thriving on other racks.

When you uncover your blooming plants after being away, you will probably find that some of the blossoms will fade rapidly because of the loss

of their humid growing environment under the plastic. But, that is a minor problem. You have saved your plants to grow and bloom for you!

Do not give up your precious African violet collection because you are retired and travel part of the year. Travel with confidence that your violets will be growing happily while you are away!

Change in Culture – What Does that Really Mean?

By Nancy Manozzi

An African violet should have the smallest or new growth coming from the crown or center of the plant, and the largest leaves are the oldest and should be the lowest row of leaves. Whenever you have smaller leaves under or lower than the larger leaves, that is probably a result of some type of culture change.

This situation is also referred to as an “off-sized” row of leaves. If you are consistent with your culture, this should not occur. When people ask for tips in growing beautiful African violets, I state simply, “Constant, consistent care. Don’t let the violets dry out, then over water. Keep your care consistent.”

I seem to get a few plants with culture change every year, usually in the late fall or early winter. That tells me that something I did during the summer months caused the situation.

Many years ago, I would water the violets with the water that was produced by the dehumidifier. (It’s a wonder I didn’t kill everything with the bacteria pulled into the water from the air!) I was quite pleased with myself for being economical and not wasteful. I was sure I had discovered the problem, which was the change in water. I started using tap water again, letting it sit in the gallon container, uncovered for twenty-four hours, before using.

That was consistent with my watering during months when the dehumidifier was not needed. What a disappointment when several months

later I noticed the change in culture situation.

I put my “thinking cap” on and tried to think about what else I do differently in the warm summer months? I reduce the number of hours my lights are on because of the heat. I also reduce the amount of fertilizer, even eliminating it for weeks at a time, as plants can’t absorb it efficiently if the temperatures are very high. (The same applies if temperatures are very low.)

My plan for this summer is to reduce the light hours when it’s very hot, but gradually, and to be more mindful about fertilizer, rotating between the two kinds I use, with the third watering, plain water. I will use this fertilizing method all the time.

I got out my “Bible” Growing To Show, by Pauline Bartholomew and The African Violet Society of America, Inc. to see what other issues could cause a culture break. They are; not potting up at the proper time, not potting down a neck soon enough, not watering plants at the proper time, and not controlling environmental factors or practicing consistent cultural method.

None of these additional factors apply to my violet care so I’ll continue to seek my personal cause. I’m hoping it’s the fertilizer issue, but only time will tell.

From Ye Bay Stater,
Official Publication of the Bay State AVS



"WHO SAID IT?"

By Andrea Worrell

Members of local African violet clubs looking for new club programs might want to try a game of "Who Said It?" It doesn't require finding an outside speaker and it costs no money. You'll discover interesting details about your fellow members and stimulate new conversations and programs throughout the game. Plus, it's fun! What's not to like? Here's how it works:

One member is the Game Host and the rest are the Players. The Host will read a question and then an answer to the question. The Players will have to quickly decide "who said it?" They all hold up a card with the member's name they think gave the answer, and whoever gets it right gets a point. The Host marks the score sheet with everyone that got points, and at the end the winner can get a prize. Easy peasy.

What we found when we played is that it was great fun learning who said what, and some of the answers were quite surprising! Once we would learn who answered a particular question the way they did, it would immediately generate questions about that topic. For example, when I, as the Host said, "Ok Players, you were asked, 'what is the craziest thing you have ever fed your violets?' and someone answered, 'mulched Oak leaves.' Who said it?" As soon as the answer was revealed, the person was peppered with questions. "How did it work for you?" How did you apply them? And so on. It stimulated a good conversation, and we all learned something new that might not have been discovered otherwise. This happened virtually in every round. It was great. When you do go through an answer that generates interest, stop and go with the conversation. The point of the game is not to get through it quickly. The point of the game IS to stop, talk, ask questions, learn, and have fun.

When our club played, we were intending

on only going through one round. Before we started we decided on our winner's prize, and how long we would play. At the end of our first round, everyone was having so much fun no one wanted to stop, and we played for two more rounds! I found a few of our members can be quite competitive, and the scores were very close, which makes it even more fun. We had seven members present, so six played and I hosted. At the end of our game, everyone was saying how they couldn't believe everything they learned by playing, and it generated ideas for several new programs. So, really, everyone won that night.

It's really easy to play. The only supplies needed are some index cards, (or any cardboard/poster board, approximately 5" x 7" or so, you don't want anything smaller, and larger is great), and, the questionnaires. Our club used 5" x 7" index cards, and they worked well for us. The questionnaire sheet is simple, short, and quick. We used the sample shown here. (End of article.) Or, you can write your own questions, or a combination of both. The flexibility of being able to change your questions allows you to repeat the game, and it will always be fresh and new. Just remember to keep it short, about ten to twelve questions.

Make enough copies of the questionnaire for each club member, including one person who will be the moderator, or Game Host. Either prior to or on "game day," pass these out to all of the members. When you hand them out, make sure you tell everyone that this isn't homework, and it's not meant to have a lot of time spent on it. The game will work best if you just read the question and jot down whatever comes to mind first.

When our club played, as each member came in, I handed them the questionnaire and a pen, and asked them to please take a few minutes to fill out the sheet. I sat everyone

separately from each other for this part. And, most importantly, tell everyone not to comment on the questions out loud and to please keep their answers PRIVATE! I think our members spent about ten to fifteen minutes on theirs. Whoever is going to be Game Host fills out a questionnaire for them self, but will also need one blank one for playing the game.

Once everyone has completed the questionnaire, the Game Host collects them and will prepare the game sheet. The game sheet is the blank questionnaire. The Host now quickly reads through everyone's answers, and chooses one person's answer for that question. Write the name of the person who's answer you want to read on your blank game sheet for that question. Do this for each of the questions. (Once you're done, it's helpful to arrange your Player's answer sheets in alphabetical order so it's quicker and easier to find and read their answer at each question.) Try to level it out so that you have about the same number of answers for each member present, since after all, they will obviously get their own answer correct. So, at the beginning of the game, it's a good idea for the Game Host to remind everyone that at some point, and possibly sooner than later, they will hear their own answer(s). Tell them please, when that happens, do NOT give away the answer by making it obvious that you know it's yours. I found each time when a Player heard their own answer, they were quite creative in how or when they revealed their answer card so as not to give up the point!

Set up your game by giving each Player a card stack with the names of every member who filled out a questionnaire. It doesn't matter if you have a questionnaire from a member who's not present. You still use their questionnaire in your answer queue, they just don't get to play. But, the more members' answers you have to choose from, the more fun it will be. This is where we used the index cards, and this you can also prepare ahead of time. For each member playing, they will get their own stack of name cards. The stack should include one

card for each member that filled out a questionnaire, including your Game Host. Write the names on the cards large and clear, so they can be easily read from a distance when held up.

The Host should be facing all the Players. It works best if the Players are all in a row, so they can't see the other Player's answers as they are being held up. The Game Host might have to do some occasional cajoling if you get some "thinkers" in the group. I started to hum the Jeopardy song when I wanted some to produce their answers. I think it was annoying enough that it worked. We played three rounds and it took over an hour, with six members playing. We all learned a lot of new things about each other, and had great fun doing it.

"Who Said It?" is also a very versatile game. We used one prize for the end winner. But, you can spice it up and change it up easily. If you have more members, or if you have a lot of leaves to be given away, you can have a winner's pick at the end of each question, with any winners getting to pick a prize. Or, instead of hash-marking a tally sheet, each Player could have a little basket in front of them, and they could each get a prize dropped in their basket on every right answer throughout the game. If you have a lot of members and a lot of prizes, it's quite likely that you will be able to play several games just from one questionnaire, since after all, there were about a dozen questions.

Once your club has played a night of "Who Said It?," there will probably be a set of new programs discovered that your club will want to do. After you've gone through those programs, you can write up a new set of questions, play another game, and generate more new programs. The possibilities are endless! So, have at it folks. No cost, no hunting for a presentation, practically no prep, and big rewards. It's a win-win! If your club tries this game, please let me know how it worked for you. I'd love to hear your feedback. You can reach me at Worrell007@aol.com. Have fun!

Questionnaire:

Violet Game: Who said it?

Name: _____

1. My first memory of an African violet was? _____

2. I have been growing African violets for _____ years.

5. My biggest misconception about violets when I first started growing was? _____

4. The biggest mistake I ever made when growing violets was? _____

5. The craziest thing I have ever fed my violets is? _____

6. In my violet collection I have about _____ different varieties.

7. When I first started growing violets, I never dreamed I'd be able to? _____

8. My goal in growing African violets is to? _____

9. The best African violet growing tip I ever got came from? _____

10. The best growing tip for African violets I ever got was? _____

11. If I could add one thing to my violet collection, it would be? _____

Are Regional Preferences Fact or Fiction?

By Pat Hancock

In the January/February issue of the AVM, this question was raised. The person who asked the question is a good friend and a person who I respect — so I am not writing this in order to be argumentative, but only to clarify and present an alternative viewpoint.

I feel there are regional preferences primarily due to the difference in the quality of the plants shown in the different regions. I have judged shows and been to shows in many regions of the country, and I can definitely state that African violet shows are not all equal. I have judged shows where it was hard to find what I considered to be a "Blue Ribbon" plant. I have also judged shows where quarter points made the difference between beautifully grown plants.

It is true that as judges we are told to "Look for beauty, not flaws." However, the judging system that we use is a negative system. If we started with a plant being zero points and added points for the beauty of the plant we would be "Looking for beauty, not flaws."

What we actually do is start with each plant being 100 points and subtract points for flaws. For this reason, the admonition to "Look for beauty, not flaws," simply means to me that we should be as kind and helpful as we possibly can. Notes written on the back of the card should be helpful and encouraging.

Two other judges and I judged the standard trailer mentioned in the article. I did the writing on the card. There is not a lot of room on the card, so notes need to be short. I always try to say something good even though it is sometimes difficult. Negatives should be intended to help the exhibitor and always to encourage. The question that was raised about the crowns had to do with one crown that was much smaller, of a different color, and on the side of the plant — not that there were just "too many crowns".

When you are judging a plant, you have no idea who entered the plant in the show. It could be an exhibitor who knows all the rules, or it could be a

complete novice who has never heard of the AVSA Judge's Handbook.

Personally, I would never refuse to judge a trailer because I suspected that it was growing from more than one central crown. I would always give the exhibitor the "benefit of the doubt." However, I also would feel obligated to mention on the card (kindly) that the difference in the appearance of the crowns made me have a question about it.

The question of regional preference came up when I was asked about the notes on the card and the reasons for the red ribbon. My answer was that perhaps judges in this region are used to seeing "well-groomed" trailers with individual crowns showing and not occluded by large leaves. I also said "...that may not be true in other regions. I don't know."

In the AVSA handbook there is not as much about trailers as I would like, but there is a statement that leaves should be similar in size and that large leaves covering crowns should be removed. The reason for this is to obtain "good form," and so that light can reach the crowns to encourage more bloom. It also states that smaller, uneven crowns should be removed.

I have asked six or seven Senior Judges what the word "form" means to them. I got a different answer from each one. Perhaps we need to be more definitive concerning what constitutes "good form."

In my opinion, trailers should not be grown as though they are "species," with little or no grooming. "Good form," for me, means even more grooming than is required for a single crown plant. Bloom should be distributed evenly over the entire plant. There should never be large leaves occluding the crowns — a *well-shaped* plant all around.

The overall quality of shows in a given region pretty much determines what judges in that region expect. A blue ribbon plant in a "poor" show could be a red ribbon, or less, in a really good show. One of the reasons we walk through a show before beginning to judge is to assess the overall quality of the entire show. There are 5 points allotted on the

SSA sheet for this purpose. A really poor show could get a zero and a really good show as much as 5 points. When all of the plants in a show are of poor quality, judges must lower their standards. Everything is not in the judges' handbook and sometimes allowances must be made in order to find winning plants.

So my answer to the question — "Are regional preferences fact or fiction?" is that they do exist, **only** because they are dependent on the overall quality of the shows that judges are asked to judge.

None of the three judges that judged this trailer had ever seen or heard of it before. I don't grow very many trailers; perhaps I should grow more. I was puzzled as to why the plant had raised so many questions after the judging. After I read the article in the January/ February AVM, I looked it up in First Class. I was surprised by what I found.

Minstrel's Mary Ruth - Follett 9319 Standard trailer - Single lavender pink pansy / purple fantasy. Dark green, pointed, quilted, serrated/red back

I could not remember any fantasy on the blossoms, and I didn't think they were singles. I called

a friend who took photos of the show and got a picture. Sure enough - the blossoms looked pink and they were not single blossoms. Where was "Classification" when this plant was entered? One of the purposes of classification is to identify plants with the descriptions in First Class.

After writing my viewpoint on all of this - I realize that in the long run - none of it really matters. Violet shows will never be perfect - after all - they really only have one real purpose - to challenge and encourage club members to grow better plants, and to stimulate the general public to cultivate the hobby. And one real value - to educate club members and the public in propagation, general culture, and the decorative use of African violets. Mistakes happen - judges are not perfect, they do the best they can. It's not the end of the world.

"To understand more about growing, showing and judging trailing African violets - read the article by Gary R. Beck in the July/August AVM, 2006.

From the June 2014 issue of *The Violet Connection*, Official Publication of the Ohio State AVS

2014 Library Message

By Anne Nicholas, Chairman

The 2014 AVSA Convention and Show is now a great memory - one filled with friends, fun, and lots of beautiful plants. The Library Committee always enjoys our once-a-year gathering. This year was particularly special because of all the extra activities such as the Holtkamp Greenhouse tours and the Grand Ol' Opry.

The show was filled with such a stunning array of plants that it must have been difficult for the judges to make choices for the top winners. That same stunning array of plants, on the other hand, made opportunities for many magnificent photographs. And, those photographs are now available on the DVD that re-visits the Nashville show. If you missed the show, you really need to see this! If you were in Nashville the DVD will be great for memories.

The 2014 AVSA Convention and Show DVD, 'Violet Pickin' in Tennessee' is now available for sale on the website. Go to the STORE link on the website to order your copy. The DVD not only

chronicles the show winners, but also gives a photo list of new hybrids introduced in 2014. Our commercial and amateur hybridizers have presented us with an amazing new selection. This 2014 DVD is great for personal use and also for affiliate club programs.

The Library Committee is proud to announce a new member - Paula Bal, from New Jersey. Paula, a new AVSA Director, brings new ideas and energy to the committee. Paula plans to increase awareness of AVSA resources through various social media.

The Library Committee continues to invite ideas and samples of programs that can be used to share African violet information with others. If you would like to contribute your own videos, etc., or know of someone who has materials, please contact one of the AVSA Library Committee members: Paula Bal, Marjorie Bullard, Barbara Burde, Janet Castiglione, Libbie Glembocki, Tom Glembocki, Anne Nicholas, or Richard Nicholas.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Kohleria 'Peridot's Rolo'

Exhibited by:
Richard Nicholas
Hybridized by:
I. James

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Columbus AVS Celebrates 65!

By Mary Martin

The Columbus African Violet Society celebrated its 65th birthday last March. The club's creation was due to the efforts of a local greenhouse owner, Leo McComb, who was one of the first African violet growers in our area. His greenhouse specialized in unusual houseplants, and he became very



Winner's Table - 2014

fond of African violets. In the 1940s, Mr. McComb began asking his African violet purchasers if they would be interested in forming a club, and he kept a list of potential members' names and telephone numbers. One day he met Hulda Evans, who took the list and called the first meeting together on March 23, 1949. Hulda became our first President,

and under her leadership the group decided to hold a show that following summer, which must have been a daring undertaking for such a young club.

To commemorate our long history, CAVS chose the theme "65 and Still Growing" for our annual spring show. The design division celebrated the 100th anniversary of the discovery of African violets; the 1992 AVSA convention, that was held in Columbus in conjunction with AmeriFlora, and 1946 – the year AVSA was founded.

Our club is blessed with many good growers and hard workers. We hold an AVSA-judged show every spring. We provide volunteers to Franklin Park Conservatory and First Community Village. This year we added a special class to our show that allowed children of members to exhibit. We realize how important it is to the future of both CAVS and AVSA to nurture their interest.

At sixty-five, we strive to stay contemporary by being open to new ideas, and at the same time, to remain aware of and appreciate our club's heritage.

Sinningia Venetian Moon

*Exhibited by:
Susan Arano*



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson

AFRICAN VIOLET MAGAZINE

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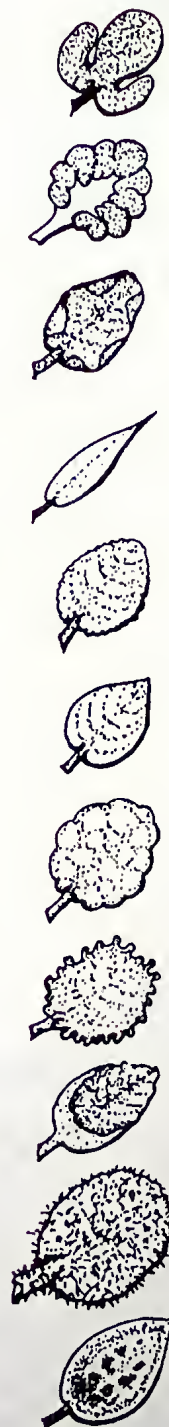
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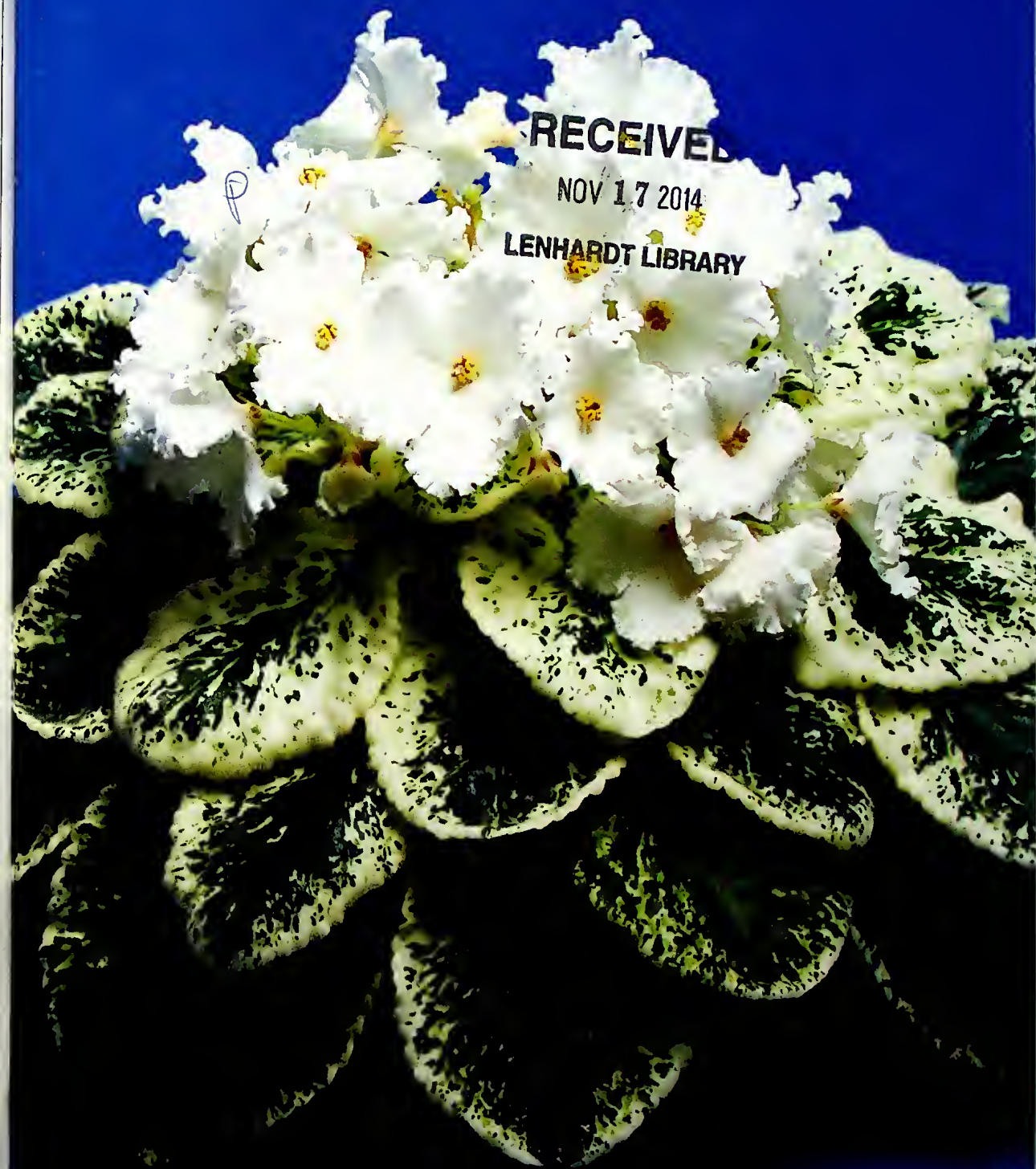
African Violet

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November • December 2014

Volume 67

Number 6



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CONVENTION AWARDS: Jan. issue. Send suggestions or contributions for convention awards to Judy Carter, 1825 W. Lincoln St., Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509. *Email* <AVSAawards@windstream.net>.

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ARTICLES BY MEMBERS, COLUMNISTS AND MEMORIALS: Send to Editor.

Please Note: Deadlines - Articles and Columnists: Jan. issue - Oct. 1; Mar. issue - Dec. 1; May issue - Feb. 1; July issue - Apr. 1; Sept. issue - June 1; Nov. issue - Aug. 1.

COMING EVENTS: Send to Editor.

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African Violet

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On this cover:

Lonestar Snowstorm

Exhibited and Hybridized by: **Richard Nicholas**
Standard

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

By John T. Carter, President

1825 W. Lincoln St.

Broken Arrow, OK 74012-8509

It is only early September as I am writing this, in order to make the publishing time table. I received the DVD from the Nashville convention and finally had time to watch it today. The Library Committee has done an outstanding job with this DVD. If you did not preorder a copy, I encourage you to go ahead and order one. It will make a great resource for an affiliate to offer as a program or to have in their local lending library. The holiday season is also coming, and this would make a great gift for some of your violet friends who may not be able to get out to meetings any longer. You can also use it on your membership table playing on a laptop to attract your visitors to violets and AVSA.

In your holiday giving, keep in mind a gift of an AVSA membership. It is a gift that will be remembered throughout the year. The quality of the Internet membership benefit will be growing with additional information added to the 'Member's Only' section. As a member, you will get to see the



new introductions and photos of the violets recently added to the AVM for a period of time before they are added to the public photos.

Improvements to the website are being carefully planned out to make it easier to find things, and to improve the quality of information. This will be an ongoing effort as long as we have the website. Suggestions and possible

content are always welcome from the membership. Send your suggestions to internet@avsa.org.

Membership is up by a few new members one month and then down a few the next month, as some members fail to renew, so we are staying at a relative stable level. You and I are the ones that will be key to growing our membership. First, we must renew our membership promptly when we get our renewal notice. Secondly, we must encourage our own affiliate members to join AVSA. We know these people share our interest in African violets and are interested in learning more about them.

Coming Events...

November 1 & 2, 2014

AVC of Greater Kansas City
Annual Judged Show/Sale
Loose Park Garden Center
51st Street and Wornall
Kansas City, MO

Nov 1 - 9am-3pm

Nov 2 - 10am-3pm

Info: Fred & Pat Inbody
(816) 373-6915

E-Mail: kskd1@juno.com



Happy Thanksgiving!

Support AVSA when you shop!

amazon smile

Did you know that Amazon now has a program for shoppers to designate a charity of their choice, and Amazon will contribute a portion of every dollar you spend? Here's an easy way to support the African Violet Society of America at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

Just go to www.avsa.org and follow the Amazon Smile directions under <NEWS> to learn more and sign up!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Editor's Notes

By Ruth Rumsey, AVM Editor

2375 North Street • Beaumont, TX 77702

Email: rrumsey@earthlink.net

It's October, and we have actually had our first cold front (...okay, *cool* front) come through. Amy and I are making our plans to attend the Lone Star AV Council's Convention at the end of the month in North Texas. Many of our friends from other parts of the country attend this annual event.

In this issue of the *African Violet Magazine*, as with most other issues, you'll find many articles from the publications of our AVSA Affiliated Clubs. There are many very good writers in these clubs. There are several wonderful contributors from other countries, especially Australia and Canada! I hope more of our members will consider writing an article for the AVM. I always need new material, and I know that you have growing experiences and ideas that would be worth sharing.

I would like to say a big "thank you," to our typesetter, **Erin Bass**, at Becker Printing Company, who does such a wonderful job on the AVM, and does her best to help me keep my sanity at "crunch time." Thanks for all you do, Erin!

On page 31 in this issue, Our Shows & Judges Committee Chairman, **Bill Foster**, has an important message about *additional guidelines for all*



of our Judges.

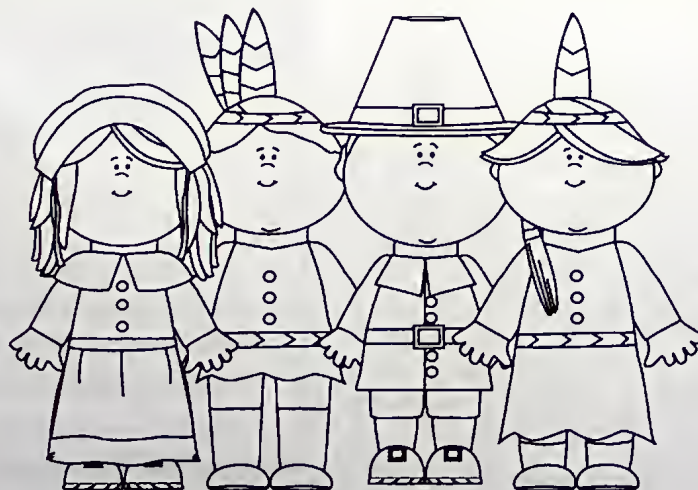
Bill has been the Chairman of that committee for a long time, and has certainly earned the respect and close friendships he's developed through his dedication to this organization.

Before **Winston Goretsky** became the Official AVM Photographer, I was forced to find a different photographer in each AVSA convention city. I rarely had a real reference, and a couple of times I had to find them from the yellow pages! One year we had a food photographer, who insisted that the AVM Committee Members look through his viewfinder before he snapped each photo. (That was the longest photography session we have ever had – six hours!) Another was a sports photographer. She did a great job and even gave me box seat tickets to the local professional baseball team's game!

Since Winston took the position, everything has run smoothly. I know up front the quality of the photos we'll have for the AVM, and we do have fun with our small, dedicated AVM Photography Committee; **Meredith Hall, Jane Rexilius, Ruth Goeke, Irene Harney, Norma Kunzel, Bill Price, and Laurel Goretsky.**

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving!

Ruth



Office Update

By Amy Carruth, AVSA Office Manager

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Fall has finally arrived in Southeast Texas, and I have definitely welcomed the cooler weather. This is usually a very active time for shows and sales. Ruth and I are looking forward to attending Lone Star this year in Plano, TX. I have never been and am excited about attending.

I have received many calls and emails regarding the Member section of the website. The username is **member**, and the password is the **last word of the President's message in each current issue of the AVM**. If you have any questions, please contact me at the office (409) 839-4725, or Email avsa@earthlink.net.

For those of you who are planning to attend the AVSA Convention and Show in Kansas City, MO, May 24 – 31, 2015, Registration Information should be available on the website after the first of the year. If you do not have access to a computer, please call the office and I will mail you a packet. I am looking forward to seeing all of you there!

I would like to remind everyone that I am the



only one in the office processing memberships and orders. I have to leave the office from time to time to run errands. If I do not answer the phone, please leave a message, and I will return your call as soon as I get back. Thank you for all for the continued support and understanding.

Attention Affiliates: Please make sure that your club's information is up to date with the AVSA office and with our Affiliate Chair, Mel Grice. You can email any changes to avsa@earthlink.net and to melsgrice@earthlink.net. **The Affiliate Liability Insurance renewals will be mailed out in November, and it is very important we have the correct information.** If your President does not receive a notice by the end of November, please contact the office immediately.

Several of our members ask me how my children, Grant and Ava, are doing. They did spend time at the AVSA office as babies. They are definitely "big kids" now with Grant in the 1st Grade and Ava in pre-school.

Happy Thanksgiving!

amy



Ava & Grant Carruth

Who doesn't love a bargain?

Beginning today, **all new**, returning, and current AVSA members have the option to purchase a two-year membership **AND** receive one extra issue of the outstanding **African Violet Magazine** added at the end of your subscription.

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Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Slap Happy

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis

Hybridized by: R. Robinson

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Optimara Rose Quartz

Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti

Hybridized by: Optimara/ Holtkamp

Miniature

Question Box

By Sue Haffner

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Dear Friends,

Here we are in winter, once again. I hope you and your plants had a productive year, and that you are already looking forward to the shows and sales ahead. New lists and catalogs from the commercial growers will soon appear, and you will have fun selecting new varieties to order. This is the time for resolutions; let's resolve to be even better, more consistent growers. (I need to make that resolution, myself!)

Q. Why do I keep getting seed pods on my violets? I haven't been doing anything to pollinate the blossoms. I only have a few plants, and they're on the kitchen windowsill over the sink.

A. If you are getting seed pods on your plants, it could be the results of pollination by thrips. Check to see if there is any other evidence of thrips infestation: spilled pollen or silvery, scraped-looking patches on the blossoms and foliage. As these plants are on a kitchen windowsill, they can be targets of opportunity for thrips. They can get into the house every time a door is opened. They can even get through window screens. You can bring them in on your clothes; pets can bring them in, also. All suspicious blossoms and buds should be removed and the plants treated with a product recommended for thrips. Neem is one such.

On the other hand, if there is no evidence of thrips, I wonder if pollination can occur through accidental, mechanical means. You could be handling your blooming plants a lot. Your sleeve could be brushing the blossoms as you reach across from one plant to another. I've told the story before about the grower who consistently got seed pods on the violets on the lowest shelf of her light stand. One day she noticed, as she



worked in the plant room, supervised by her two long-haired cats, that their tails were lashing back and forth over the plants on the floor-level shelf. Mystery solved: it was pollination-by-cat.

Well, even if there's no spilled pollen, it's best to assume the worst. Disbud and spray.

Q. I have a friend who is really "green"—environmentally-conscious—and she has told me several times that we shouldn't use peat moss in our soil mixes, that the world is running out of peat, so we should find a substitute. Is that really true? If it is, what should we use?

A. The business of harvesting peat moss has environmental and political implications. Peat bogs store more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem, according to a major science journal. More than 560 billion tons of carbon is held in the world's peat lands, more than in all the trees on earth. This makes peat moss a precious resource. Some nations have limited the amount of peat that can be mined per year. The product that is recommended for use with African violets is Canadian sphagnum peat moss. Even though Canadian producers harvest only a small percentage of their peat each year, it is not exactly a renewable resource, as it is estimated that restoration of a mined peat bog will take at least 3,000 years.

Sphagnum peat moss is still available. I don't think we need to feel guilty about buying and using it. A lot of big commercial growers, however, are switching to compost or coir, chiefly because of the high cost of mining and transportation. It may be that we will all, ultimately, have to make that decision, as well. Coir (coconut fiber) is an ingredient that a number of violet growers have already tried. When it first

came on the market, we heard a lot of cautionary tales about coir that was too salty (as it's soaked in sea water in India or Sri Lanka where it is processed.) Those who used it were advised to rinse the material multiple times. Nowadays, the commercial product is soaked in a calcium buffering solution to remove the salt, and coir is readily available from a number of sources. Some growers consider it superior to peat moss in that it is clean and fluffy, easier to re-wet and doesn't break down and acidify. Give it a try.

Q. We all know how easy it is to propagate violets from leaves. I've done it hundreds of times. Yet I have this friend who has the greenest thumb; her violets look great and are always in bloom. I've tried to get her to do some propagating but she says the only way she can get a violet leaf to root is to plant it in the same pot with its mother. Why would this be?

A. Without knowing any other details about how your friend prepares her cut leaves—are they old leaves or mature but healthy ones; are they trimmed; are the petioles carefully cut; etc—I would say that those leaves root and produce plantlets because they get the same good care that her other violets get. We usually take care to maintain good humidity around our leaf cuttings; hers would profit by being in close proximity to “mama.” Also, there is some evidence that plants do nurture their offspring, in a way. We know that some cuttings, such as willows and oleanders, are much more likely to root if plunged in water in a bunch, rather than singly. It has been observed that seedlings germinating by the mother plant thrive while seedlings of “orphan” species do not. Do the parent plants exude some protective chemical beneficial to their offspring? Do cuttings of the same plant “bleed” a chemical that stimulates root growth? Research in recent years has shown the benefits of mycorrhizal fungi in root health, especially with plants growing in the ground. The thinking is that the mycorrhiza can remain in the soil and can help feed and protect multiple generations of plants.

Well, the above discursion shows that we don't always know what our plants are getting up to down under the soil! In a way, the root zone is still something of a mystery.

Q. Over a year ago, I went to a plant sale held in a private home. The grower is a professional in all but name, as she has a greenhouse and has periodic sales. The plants were absolutely gorgeous, large and covered with blooms. She grows varieties of violets that you don't see in the usual garden shops. Anyway, I bought several plants. They did well for me; I still have them. But they quit blooming many months ago. What should I do to get them to bloom again? I have the plants on a credenza by a southeast window, shaded by a sheer curtain. It's my best window for light, but maybe this isn't good enough light for them?

A. First, the plants that the grower was selling probably had been forced into heavy blooming by disbudding. Of course, this is a fairly common practice and does not hurt the plant, but it may set the plant back and make you wait much longer for your next crop of flowers. There probably isn't any way you can approximate the conditions the greenhouse grower has, but you should try to get the plants accustomed to conditions in your home. First, I would repot them—if you haven't already done so. Use a potting mix similar to what the grower uses. Call and ask her what it is. Remove the oldest leaves and pot in an appropriately sized pot. Begin a regular watering and feeding program. About the light from the window: if the plants have not seemed to “reach” for the light and if the foliage does not show signs of receiving too much light (bleached leaves, tight crown, suckering), then it is likely suitable. I trust that you turn the plants every day or so to keep growth even. If you have other violets, and if they seem to thrive in that light, then these particular plants may be able to adapt to the same environment.

Q. I've been trading violet leaves with a grower across the country for several years.

Generally, I've had good luck with the leaves she has sent me. The last batch, though, had been handled roughly somewhere along the way and the contents of the box had been shaken up quite a bit. Some of the leaves had been snapped off their stems. Do you think that, if I planted the stems, I could get baby plants?

A. Well, if you don't try, you'll never know! The stems (petioles) are green and so, theoretically at least, can perform photosynthesis. But why not just plant the leaves? Some growers will carve a "stem" by cutting away that portion of the leaf at the base of the midrib. That probably isn't really necessary, though. Just plant the leaves and see what happens.

Q. *My garden club friends consider me "The Violet Lady" and, when they hear that, people frequently ask me if African violets can be grown outside in the ground. I always say no, but I wonder if there are areas where they can grow outside. I don't mean just that potted plants are summered outside on a porch or*

something like that, but actually planted in the ground.

A. It isn't unusual for people to confuse African violets with the hardy garden violets. I have encountered this question myself. I imagine that growers in frost-free climates, such as Florida, might have experimented with growing violets outside. If just the right situation can be found for them, they might last a season or two. Sometimes violets and other gesneriads are planted in temporary outdoor displays—though this isn't the same as actually being in the ground. Years ago, a lady in our local club grew African violets outside in the ground under a lath structure. (Well, I saw photos of this but never actually saw her growing setup. But others who had said she had been doing this for years.) The plants looked fine, were blooming. They were single blues, as I recall, possibly among the early violet hybrids. So I guess the bottom line is that our violet hybrids are not garden plants, but that doesn't mean that one shouldn't try something different. Good growing!

Recycle, Go Green, and get Better Minis

By Kat MacNeil

Cooking for one is a drag. "Take out" often seems to be the answer, at least part of the time. But when you buy the ready-made stuff, it always comes in so much packaging! You open this, and peel off that, and zip this and tear that.

Sometimes it takes longer to open the containers than it would to cook it yourself from scratch.

I felt compelled to start doing something with all that packaging, something more than just throwing it in the recycle bin. Anyway, I started to shop at a health food market. I wanted to improve the quality of the food I was eating.

Organic is more than a fad. I really started to pay attention to what I was buying, and in the process, discovered a great way to reuse the container for a

half dozen organic eggs, and create a terrific little hot-house container for putting down the smallest miniature violet leaves.

In my little plastic greenhouse, they don't dry out so fast, and aren't dwarfed in size like they would be in my usual Solo cup containers.

The egg carton is clear plastic. The top and bottom are the same dome shape. I put potting mix in the bottom half, insert the leaves and water, and close the top. Since it's clear, I can see everything that is happening, and all I need to do is open, water, and close again. It's just perfect!

From the Violet Press, Publication of the Lake Area Violet Growers, MN



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Boolaroo

Exhibited by: Ben Haning

Hybridized by: R. Robinson

Trailer

In Search of New Violets

Dr. Jeff Smith, *The Indiana Academy*

Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

Every once in a while a question comes across that doesn't appear to have an answer. Joyce Stork recently contacted me with a report from a hybridizer that had grown out a self-pollination cross on one of her plants. A picture of the plant clearly showed that the foliage was variegated with white on the leaf edges, the classical 'Tommie Lou' style of variegation. This variegation type has been known for decades as being inherited maternally. If the seed parent has the trait, the offspring will have the variegation. The amount of variegation can vary from heavy to almost non-existent, but this pattern of maternal inheritance for 'Tommie Lou' variegation has been well-established by many crosses and many hybridizers.

What made the results of this self-pollination cross so strange was that the offspring were 100% non-variegated. Not lightly variegated, all the seedlings were *solid green*. Thus, we have a contradiction. The outcome of the cross on a 'Tommie Lou' variegated plant, regardless of whether it was a self-pollination or an unknown cross-pollination, should have produced variegated offspring, yet it clearly did not.

So what is the explanation for this anomaly? As I reported back to Joyce Stork, I don't have a ready explanation for this one. The results are 100% contradictory to what I would have expected. A hypothesis that I put forth was that perhaps the cluster of cells that eventually grew out into the flower stalk and flowers had sported or mutated and lost the abnormal chloroplasts for the variegated trait. Without the mutated chloroplasts, all of the seedlings would have inherited non-variegation. Why a flower stalk should mutate this way is unknown, and I have no way of providing an experiment to support or not support the hypothesis. For now, this oddity or exception will just have to be part of our large data



base of experience in hybridizing African violets.

Q: I recently heard of a plant described as having "celery" foliage. What type of leaves are these?

A: I suspect that what was meant was that the plant has leaves similar to the cultivar known as 'Celery.' This plant has longifolia leaves (narrow, long, and pointed) and the genetic trait for bustled-backed foliage. The combination produces leaves that twist and curl, producing a plant that looks very similar to a stalk of celery. 'Celery' is a very different looking African violet and one that is impossible to groom for show.

Both the longifolia and bustled-backed leaf traits are genetic dominants and will be expressed in the first generation. Several of the David Senk hybrids have the combination of the two traits. While they are not the most prolific bloomers, the foliage is often very interesting, especially as several of these plants are trailers.

Q: One of my plants is producing leaves that appear to be half "boy" and half "girl" foliage. What is going on?

A: The growing point in the crown of the plant has evidently mutated so that some of the cells have changed from "boy" foliage to "girl" foliage. As the leaves are forming, they are being made from both kinds of cells. The mixture of genetic types is being expressed in the leaves. Evidently, the cells are segregated so that half of the cells forming the leaf have the "girl" foliage and the other half the "boy" foliage.

Your plant is repeating the mutation of 'Blue Boy' that gave rise to the "girl" foliage type. The original mutation was found in a plantlet, and all of the cells showed the leaf shape change. This plant was named 'Blue Girl' and was the start of the "girl" foliage characteristic.

The "girl" mutation often tends to dwarf the overall plant. I suspect you are finding the "boy" side larger growing than the "girl" side. Leaf cuttings taken clearly in the middle of the "boy" side or the "girl" side should produce plantlets that will be 100% of that leaf type.

Q: Are there African violet hybrids that are naturally male or female sterile?

A: Yes, I have seen several examples of plants that were effectively male sterile. This usually occurs when all of the stamens have been converted into petals. The flowers are doubles or even triples in petal number, but there are no functional stamens.

A picture that recently made the rounds on one of the African violet e-mail groups was of an Optimara plant that clearly had no stamens at all. This was a change in the normal flowers for the

cultivar. A single pistil was clearly seen in the center of the flower, but there were no stamens at all. In this case, the stamens hadn't been converted to petals, they were just absent.

Q: Can African violets be crossed with Petrocosmea, which looks very similar to the Saint-paulia species plants.

A: The chromosome number of African violets is 30 while that of *Petrocosmea* is 34. This difference will likely keep the two from producing offspring, although sometimes members of the Gesneriad family will still cross even if the chromosome numbers don't match.

Hybridizer Dale Martens, however, reports that she tried making crosses between these plants for over a year without any success. It would appear that traditional breeding methods won't work for crossing these two genera.

CAPILLARY MATTING

By Heather Harkness

Capillary Matting is similar to wick watering. Plants are placed on a mat constantly moistened with water and fertilizer, which is absorbed by the plants. The mats must be made of a thick felt type of synthetic material. I have bought a light weight carpet type of material which has worked very well. This may be laid on the shelf or in shallow trays. The potting mix near the holes in the bottom of the pots must be in contact with the mat so that the moisture is able to be drawn up into the pot.

I have hedged my bets when using this method by inserting a wick which is always in contact with the mat. This ensures that the moisture goes up into the pot. One problem with this method is that the mats can dry out very quickly. If they do, the whole process of starting the capillary action must be repeated by moistening both the soil in the pots and the matting. Another problem is that if the shelf is not quite level, some of the plants may not get enough water. This can be rectified as suggested above. Be sure to check the plants on both ends of the container. A variation on this method is to use the kitty litter trays with the acrylic material cover-

ing the wire inserts and reaching down to the bottom of the tray. The trays can be filled as with the wick watering method. I have found this to be very successful, and I have not had the problem with algae. However, if you have any type of disease or pest problem, it will spread quickly with mat watering.

Another potential problem is that the mats can get quite dirty. However, when you are observing your plants, you can see if this is happening and wash the piece of material. I have not found this to be a problem. It is possible to use newspaper and, when soiled, throw it away and replace with fresh paper.

One of the great advantages with this method is that the open spaces with wet matting between the pots are a wonderful way of providing and raising the humidity around the plants. Take care during the colder months though, unless you have the heating turned up. There are capillary matting systems available commercially.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia

Looking for African Violets in Scotland

By Stephanie Griffith

Photo Credits: Stephanie Griffith and Sadie Barber

For African violet enthusiasts, a trip to Edinburgh, Scotland, is not complete without a visit to the Royal Botanic Garden-Edinburgh (RBGE). While planning a trip to Scotland, we became aware that the new *Saintpaulia* species from Tanzania were at the garden. So, making a visit was essential. Our visit was in May, 2014, when the garden was awash in shades of reds, purples, yellows, and oranges, from the blossoming rhododendrons. It's wonderfully landscaped, which made our visit even more pleasurable. We expected something special, but what we experienced was way beyond that. It was spectacular.

This was in large part due to a fantastic tour given to us by Sadie Barber, the Senior Horticulturalist in the Research Collection who manages the glasshouse collection of *Gesneriaceae*, including the propagation facility and the seed bank.



Stephanie Griffith & Sr. Horticulturalist
Sadie Barber

Along with a team from the RBGE, Sadie has been on a specimen gathering expedition to Tanzania to collect both live specimens and herbarium samples. She explained the planning for such a trip, and not only does it include deciding where to go and detailed travel logistics, but also submitting specific, detailed information to the Tanzanian government on where they will be collecting, what they expect to collect, and what will happen to

those specimens once collected.

There is a lot of "red tape," which is understandable, given the history of specimen collection in Africa. The Tanzanian government and RBGE agreed that plants will not be given or sold to any individual or group outside the garden. Unfortunately, this restriction included other botanical gardens as well.

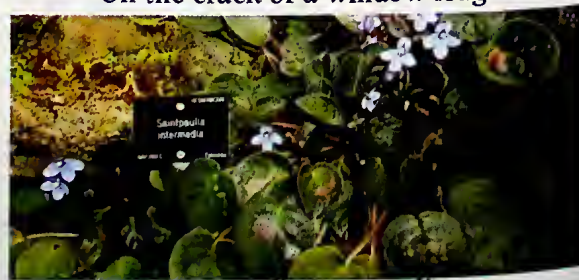
My husband and I got a "behind the scenes" tour through the propagation green houses which have not only plants from the *Gesneriad* family, but ferns, begonias, orchids, and many other plants originating in tropical parts of the world. There is row upon row of potted *Saintpaulia*, including *S. orbicularis* var. *purpurea*, *S. goetiana*, *S. intermedia*, etc.



Growing on a rock-covered table



On the crack of a window ledge



Saintpaulia intermedia

Saintpaulia displayed their hardiness by occasionally seeding on the rock-covered tables or in cracks on the window ledge as well. This is where plants are grown to be shown in the public areas and for use in research. The chief attraction was, of course, the two newly identified *Saintpaulia* species plants: *S. ulugurensis* and *S. watkinsii*. Discovered on a trip to Tanzania in 2005, RBGE researchers found these two new species in the Uluguru Mountains of East Africa.

The research collection is housed in three greenhouses that were each about sixty feet long by about twenty-five feet wide. The humidity hovers around 80%, and the temperature ranges between 60° and 75°F, depending on the time of day. Planting soil is composed of chunky pieces of bark, graded for potting and propagation, along with charcoal, perlite, vermiculite, dolomitic limestone, and slow-release fertilizer. Large tables, especially outfitted for watering and lighting, are covered with potted plants in all stages of growth.

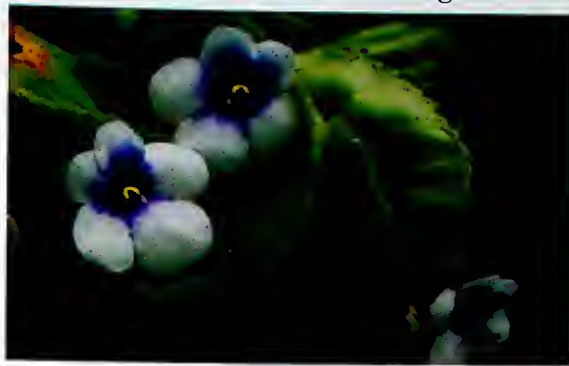


One of the Nurseries

There are also two large “nursery” rooms, which serve as propagation rooms. The environments in these rooms can be controlled in an even more exacting way than in the greenhouses. Two large control panels outside the rooms control humidity, temperature, water, etc. In the nursery rooms there are elaborate lighting systems are used to nurture the young plants.

The greenhouses and propagation rooms just described are not normally available for public viewing. The “public conservatory” consists of several buildings especially designed to be public viewing areas, with each building offering different climatic conditions.

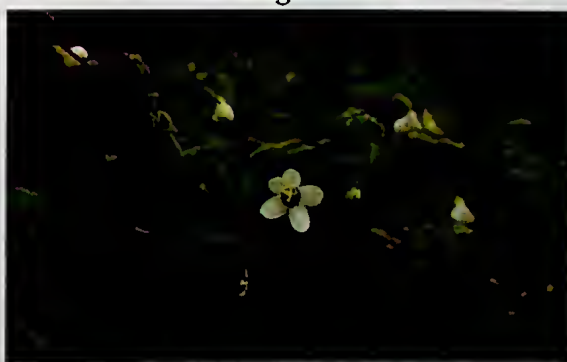
The public conservatory is landscaped to resemble the natural setting for the plants. In the natural world, *Saintpaulia* grow in rock crevices alongside other plants. In Edinburgh, the plants are displayed among other *Gesneriads* including *Primulinas*, *Streptocarpus*, *Aeschynanthus*, *Nautilocalyx*, and many more tropical plants. Although *S. ulugurensis* and *S. watkinsii* are not on public view as of yet, according to Sadie,



S. ulugurensis



S. ulugurensis



S. watkinsii blooming

there are plans to put them on display to the public soon.

The garden was established in the 17th century as a physic garden, (a type of herb garden with medicinal plants) and is now known for the collection, research, propagation, and quarantining of plants from around the world. Sadie told us about some of the research being done on *Saintpaulia*, investigating the phylogeny, or the evolutionary relationships, of *Saintpaulia* and *Streptocarpus*. Other *Gesneriad* research includes classification research on *Gesneriad* species from China and various Southeast Asian countries. Looking into the evolutionary and chromosomal changes in this family of plants is a large part of this work.

The discovery team included Elspeth Haston, and others. Ms Haston wrote a very interesting article, entitled *Two New Species of Saintpaulia from the Uluguru Mountains, Tanzania*, published by Curtis's Botanical Magazine in 2009. The article describes the area as a "Biodiversity Hotspot." As defined by Conservation International, a Biodiversity Hotspot has a very large variety of endemic flora and fauna. This particular section of the Uluguru Mountains where *S. ulugurensis* and *S. watkinsii* were found receives approximately 2,500 to 4,000 mm (approximately 8' to 13') of rain yearly. The plants were found on the eastern slopes of these mountains that experience winds from the Indian Ocean; it is also the lower part of the evergreen rain forest.

The two new species are endemic to this area along with two previously discovered *Saintpaulia* species (*S. inconspicua* and *S. goetzeana*), eight

Streptocarpus species, and a *Schizoboea*.

These new species plants, *S. ulugurensis* and *S. watkinsii*, have two-tone, five-lobed corollas with different color markings for each. *S. ulugurensis* has a white edge and an inner corolla pattern of blue/violet. The three lower lobes of the *S. watkinsii* have blue/violet coloring deep in the corolla with the two upper lobes being completely white. The leaves of *S. ulugurensis* are a medium green with prominent veins on the green under side. They also appear a bit thicker than other *Saintpaulia* species leaves. *S. watkinsii* leaves are a slightly darker green with prominent hairs on the top of the leaves. For *S. ulugurensis* the growth pattern is more compact than *S. watkinsii*, which has a more trailing habit. Sadie provided a picture of *S. ulugurensis* taken in the wild. The plant was in deep shade and had very long petioles, approximately 14," and large leaves.

Haston also points out that the International Union of Conservation of Nature has signified these plants as 'critically endangered' because of the small single population. The obvious question is, "What else could be discovered in this forest zone?" Clearly, there is a continuing need to protect the ecosystem in which these plants grow.

Our visit to the Royal Botanic Garden-Edinburgh was a great experience. Seeing the two new *Saintpaulia* species was extra special. We give a special thanks to Sadie Barber for spending time with us and explaining the behind the scenes working of the garden. As African violet enthusiasts, we all must remember the importance of the species plants and make an extra effort to help them survive.



Columnnea Hybrid

*Exhibited by:
Sallie Barlow*



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky



Shy Blue

Exhibited by:

Ben Haning

Hybridized by:

S. Sorano/Lyon

Greenhouses

Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Judging Design – AVSA

By Paul Kroll

When speaking of design, most people — spectator and judges alike — tend to think in terms of “I like that one” or, “I don’t like that one.” It is human nature to like or dislike anything, but we must remember that the AVSA Handbook does not use those terms anywhere within its covers!

How is it best to judge the Design section of AVSA shows? By utilizing the AVSA Scale of Points for each particular type of design: Interpretive Flower or Interpretive Plant Arrangements and Container Gardens.

The Scale of Points for Container Gardens has the top category labeled “Landscape Plan” as opposed to the category “Design,” used for the plant and flower arrangements. The elements and principles of design do not apply so strictly to container gardens as they do to the other arrangements. By this, I mean that different levels of the landscape enter into the consideration: hills, valleys, upper and lower levels of the “soil” surface.

I was once on a panel that judged a dish garden which was entirely flat, with no contours at all. The panel awarded this exhibit a third place, taking off most points under the design category. Much to our horror, we found out that this exhibit was done by Ethel Champion, *who was a Master Judge!*

She comforted us and said, “You did the right thing! I tossed that dish garden together the night before entry, in a hurry, and it didn’t deserve any higher score.” Whew! Think about this example and remember it the next time you construct or judge a container garden. If you do not have material tall enough to be your “tree(s),” make the hill on which you plant that material a bit higher. It is also possible to have the lowest portion/section of the landscape well below the edge of the dish you choose. This is another way of adding interest and varying levels of your landscape.

In the Interpretive Flower and Interpretive Plant sections of the show, the top category on

the Point Score chart is for Design. This is where the elements and principles of design are assessed as they apply to the design you created, or are judging.

There are six elements of design. The elements of design are readily seen.

*Color * Pattern * Form * Space * Line * Texture*

And, there are six principles of design. The principles of design are felt, rather than seen.

*Balance * Proportion * Contrast * Rhythm * Dominance * Scale*

Twelve categories share the total of 40 points in the overall Design category of the Scale of Points for Arrangements. *40 divided by 12 = 3.33 each for those twelve categories.*

Judges must tally the category points, adding or deducting appropriately. Once a score has been reached, it is imperative that the written comments justify that score. If points have been deducted, indicate the reason behind the decision. Do not leave the exhibitor to wonder. Sometimes it is more beneficial, as judges, to think in terms of the comments first and then deduct the points to reflect those comments. Either way, it is necessary to think in terms of “balancing” the scores and the written comments.

One of the most prominent errors on the part of an exhibitor is *not filling the niche to approximately seven-eighths of the height*. We often see designs that are considerably short of filling the height dimension. It is possible to raise the design in its niche by elevating the whole thing with something under the cloth or drape at the bottom of the exhibit. This will raise the whole design up and help to fill that niche.

Another thing to consider is that as measurements decrease and a smaller design is executed, the categories of scale and proportion become very important. A design that is too large for its small niche will be very out of proportion. A container that is too large will also detract from the overall proportion of the design.

One needs to be very careful of color as well.

Anything white used in a design really jumps out. My wife always says, "White adds ten pounds." This is a good quip to remember when choosing a white container or other object to use in your design.

Another consideration when thinking in terms of the smaller arrangements is blossom size. Using a miniature or semi-miniature blossom will help the proportion and scale of your overall execution. Try different blossoms of differing size and see which appeals best to you.

This article is not meant to be a complete guide to design either, as a judge or exhibitor, but rather a thought-provoking essay to encourage you to think about your designs, whether judging them or executing them.

Remember: Growing is great, but designers have more fun!

Reprinted from *The Violet Connection*, Official Publication of the Ohio State AVC June 2014

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

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Chimera

Anonymous

Fantasy

2014 AVSA Convention



Geneva



Tampa African Violet Society

In memory of Claude Chester & Jeanne Horton

Jack & Jane Cochran

Windsor African Violet Society (CT)

Thousand Oaks African Violet Society

Hortense Pittman

Alan & Kristina Popey

Bill Farrand

Jeri Anderson

Dale K. Stefan



Multicolor

Shirley Olivieri – *In memory of Gerry Brenner*

Sue Ramser – *In memory of Wanda Warren & Barbara Hargrove*

Tristate African Violet Council (NJ)

In honor of Janet Riemer for her years of service to Tristate AVC and AVSA

African Violet Society of Greater Tulsa

Terry Klemesrud

Quentin C. Schlieder, Jr.

Morgan Simmons



Two-tone

Cross Town African Violet Club (WI)

Donna Vogelpohl

Gail Podany

Burbank African Violet Club (CA)

San Diego North County African Violet Society



Thumbprint

Metropolitan St. Louis African Violet Club

In lieu of judging expense for Randy

Deutsch

Shannon Breau

David B. Tooker

JoAnne D'Angelo

Total this period: \$3,429.28

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Chimeras and the Bloom Stalk (Let It Grow, Let It Grow!)

Article and Photos by Mary Corondan

Chimeras have always been a fascination of mine. For those of you who are new growers, chimeras are African violets that have striped blossoms with coloration forming a pinwheel pattern. The lovely pinwheel blossoms make them unique, and the difficulty of propagation makes them more expensive. Chimeras do not bloom true unless they are propagated by suckers or bloom stalks. The coloring found in the blossom is always intriguing.



The Alps Blossom

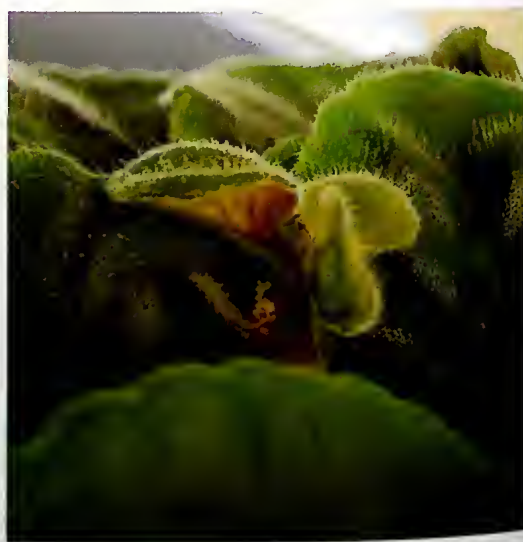
One means of propagating a chimera and insuring a young plant that will bloom true is by a sucker. This is easy if the plant suckers readily. Suckers can destroy the symmetry of the foliage and can be difficult to extract. There are violet varieties, such as Eternal Orbit, that rarely sucker. Plants can be encouraged to sucker by pinching out the crown. These suckers are then placed in a light potting medium and placed in a terrarium environment until roots form.

A second way of propagation is by cutting off the bloom stalk (peduncle) and putting it in a soil-less medium. The blossoms are removed from the

bloom stalk, and the bloom stalk is cut about one half inch below the set of tiny leaves (bracket). It is then put in a rooting medium of equal parts perlite and vermiculite and placed in a terrarium environment until it roots and grows. The bloom stalks are fragile, and some of them have a tendency to rot and die. The bloom stalks of some varieties have no leaves at all and cannot be propagated using this means.



Bracket



Bracket Growing (Side View)

Another method used to propagate chimeras by bloom stalk is to let a plantlet grow on the end of the bloom stalk. This involves finding a bloom stalk on the plant that is full of blossoms just ready to open. At this time, a great deal of the plant's energy is going through that bloom stalk and into the blossoms. Remove all the buds and their pedicels from the bloom stalk, but leave the bracket intact. The bracket is the two tiny leaves on the peduncle, just below the pedicels. This bloom stalk, with bracket intact, is left on the plant and allowed to thrive.



Bracket After Growth

This is the time to "let it grow, let it grow." Under these conditions, the bracket begins to grow and more leaves form, creating a tiny plantlet at the tip of the peduncle. When this little plant is about the size of a nickel, it is ready to separate from the mother plant. Cut the peduncle about 1/2" below the baby plant, and place the plantlet in a mixture of one part perlite and one part of vermiculite. Be sure not to put the little plantlet too deep in the soilless mixture. The bottom leaves should be just above the soil line to prevent the plantlet from getting too moist and rot-

ting. Put it in a terrarium environment, and it will grow and thrive. Occasionally, plants grown from chimera suckers and bloom stalks do not bloom true to variety, so keep the mother plant until the first blossoms open on the young plant.

This method of letting the plantlet grow on the peduncle while still attached to the plant has worked very well. So far, not a single plantlet has been lost. The varieties that have proved successful are The Alps, Yukako and Eternal Orbit. Several bloom stalks can be left on the mother plant to grow tiny plantlets at one time. The symmetry of the mother plant is not adversely affected as it would be if the mother plant were permitted to grow a sucker.



The Alps Plant

Try the "let it grow" method on your chimeras to produce strong plantlets that develop quickly. Chimeras are a conversation piece and are enjoyed by the novice as well as the experienced grower.

From the *Newsletter* of the Lone Star AV Council



It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

by Sylvia A. Farnum, PhD

safarnum@aol.com

A time comes in nearly everyone's life, when they have to move. Sometimes, the move is simple, from one house to another. Other moves are more complicated.

Some years ago, we had to move from one state to another. At the time, I had two racks of African violets and a number of plants housed on other shelves. My husband and I had been living in two places for about a year. My husband had an apartment that came with his ½ time job in Minnesota. I was living with our daughter in our house in North Dakota, and working there. My husband flew home for his other ½ time job in North Dakota every weekend.

Finally, I found a good job in Minnesota, and we decided to move. We put our house up for sale, and bought a house in Minnesota. The house, our present home, was perfect for my African violets. It has a spacious second kitchen - dining area that would serve as my plant room.

I had to start work in the middle of October. So, we loaded up our big travel trailer, with plant stands and African violets and set off for Minnesota. My husband pulled the trailer, and I drove our second vehicle, towing our boat. We got to my husband's apartment around 10:30 PM. I left for the bed and breakfast across town with our daughter, because she had to start school the next day. We were staying close to the house we purchased, but we couldn't take possession of it for six weeks, while we waited for paperwork. Since it was already late, my husband set up the violet racks and put the plants on them in his spacious apartment.

The next six weeks were very busy. I was starting a new job, and our daughter was starting classes at a new high school. We had to get up at 5 AM to eat breakfast at the bed and breakfast in time for her to catch the school bus. There was no time to drive 45 miles across town to visit the violets.

I told my husband to plug in the light timers

and water the violets. I think I had around 250 plants on their racks in his apartment.

Finally, after six weeks, we were ready to close on our house. That is when the fun began. We received permission to move our plants into the new house early. It all sounded so easy.

We had to move the plants after we were both finished with work for the day. My husband hitched the travel trailer. He left the plant stands in his apartment and loaded the plants in their trays into the trailer. It was a dark and stormy night. A *very* dark and *very* stormy night, with sleet blowing across the roads. It was cold, and the trailer was cold inside. I told my husband to cover the plants, but he really didn't have much on hand to cover them, so he used some newspaper.

We met at our to-be new home. My husband parked and we unlocked the back door to the house. We had the key, but were required to return it after we left the plants in the house. The street is about eighty feet from the back door. When we tried the lights in the kitchen, there was no electricity. We had only been in the house twice, and that was six weeks before. There we were in the pitch dark, feeling our way. We only had one flashlight.

My brave husband descended into the pitch-dark basement to look for the fuse box. Nothing would have persuaded me to do that, but he managed to find it. He flipped the master switch, but there was no electricity. The storm had knocked it out.

We couldn't leave the plants out in the cold trailer much longer. It was an hour trip back across town to my husband's apartment. So, the three of us started moving the trays, one by one, in the driving sleet from the driveway into the dark kitchen. We felt our way and filled the countertops and some of the floor with trays of plants. The newspapers blew up as we walked to the house and exposed the plants to the bitter

cold wind. There were thirty-two trays of plants. The house was warmer inside than it was outside, but we had no idea when the power would come back on. We didn't even know where the thermostats were.

After we moved all of the plants into the house, we locked the door, leaving the violets in the dark. My husband set off across town towing the trailer, and my daughter and I went back to the bed and breakfast, where we had been staying for six weeks.

At the end of the week, we moved into the house. The power was on, and the house was warm. It was a nice day, and our furniture arrived the same day.

The violets looked terrible. The plants on one side of every tray had frost-bitten leaves. That must have been the down-wind side when we carried them to the house! To make matters worse, just before we moved, we had been to a national convention. Apparently, I had inadvertently brought home thrips with some of my purchased plants. My husband didn't notice them, although almost every plant was in bloom and happy thrips were running in every direction!

When people ask me what happened to some of the varieties I had grown for years, I smile and say, "They must have gotten discarded sometime!" I lost a few plants that night.

After we got settled, I didn't know what to do about the huge infestation of thrips on the remaining violets. The problem had gone far beyond spraying. I settled on a strategy. Luckily, we still had some warm days that year. I cut every plant down to the crown and removed all of the roots and potting soil. I gave the plants a

thorough bath in the sink, then, outside, beside the door to the laundry room, I sprayed them thoroughly with a garden spray containing pyrethins, until they were soaked top and bottom. Our daughter helped me work in an assembly-line fashion. She labeled Styrofoam cups with the plant names and filled the cups with water. We put the cups into the trays, which we had disinfected. We put each crown into the water in its own cup, and covered it with a plastic bag. I used some aluminum foil to steady the crown, if it looked as though it needed support to stay upright in its cup.

We scrubbed and disinfected the racks and the floor and the whole area with bleach, soap, and water. I sprayed the racks with the garden spray to make sure. Then, we put all of the trays back on the racks.

I never saw another thrips that year. After the crowns rooted, I potted them in potting soil in the pots that were recycled by soaking them in bleach and scrubbing them.

I know that some people have had great experiences moving their plants. I even know one violet club member whose husband was in the Air Force. When they moved from North Dakota to Texas, she packed her violets in layers with cardboard supports inside her large chest freezer. She didn't mention anything to the movers, and her plants traveled in the moving van. They arrived in perfect shape! However, the worst can, and may happen.

One thing I learned from our move is that African violets are tough and resilient. That move was years ago, but I still grow some of the varieties I brought with me that dark and stormy night.





Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Lady Baltimore

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis

Hybridized by: I. Fredette

Variegated Large



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Pixie Blue

Exhibited by: Rodney Barnett

Hybridized by: L. Lyon

Miniature Trailer

AVSA's BEST VARIETY LIST FOR 2014

Compiled by John Carter

1825 W Lincoln St, Broken Arrow, OK 74012 • bestvarieties@avsa.org

Welcome to AVSA's 2014 Best Variety List. Thank you to all who participated by regular mail, online, and email. I hope that as more members learn of the online submission procedure we will see participation increase. Any submissions received between now and September 1, 2015 will be included in the 2015 report.

Again, this year we list each of the top twenty-five favorites with their descriptions from AVSA's First Class computer data base. Many have asked about species and the List. Yes, species are counted. The top species this year were variations of *S. ionantha*. I found it interesting that your top selections were registered between 1978 and 2008. Where are the new introductions? Twenty-one of 2013 favorites were again your favorites this year. Now to YOUR choices for the 2014 List. Read the list, read the descriptions, and choose your new favorites for your collection.

Irish Flirt (7577) 11/07/1991 (S. Sorano) Double bright green and white frilled star. Medium green, wavy. Semiminiature

Picasso (6924) 10/04/1988 (M. Tremblay) Double light blue and white/variable white fantasy. Variegated medium green, plain/silver-green back. Large

Frozen in Time (9167) 02/03/2003 (Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano) Single-semidouble white star/variable lavender tinge; green edge. Variegated light green and ivory, quilted. Standard

Blue Dragon (9516) 12/17/2005 (Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/P. Sorano) Double light blue large frilled star/raspberry edge. Dark green, plain/red back. Large

Orchard's Bumble Magnet (8479) 08/21/1996 (R. Wilson) Double pink star. Medium green, plain, pointed. Miniature

Precious Red (9724) 01/15/2007 (H. Pittman) Semidouble-double dark red pansy. Dark green, plain/red back. Miniature

Rainbow's Quiet Riot (R. Wasmund) Semidouble blue-purple large star/white fantasy. Dark green, round, scalloped. Standard

The Alps (7813) 10/03/1992 (K. Horikoshi/H. Sawara) Single semidouble chimera white pansy/light blue stripe. Medium green, plain, quilted. Standard

Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler (8745) 07/27/1998 (P. Hancock) Semidouble bright pink ruffled pansy/variable raspberry fantasy; raspberry edge. Variegated dark green, cream and pink, plain, glossy/red back. Large (DAVS 1621)

Harbor Blue (6174) 02/24/1986 (T. Weber) Single light blue/darker eye. Dark green, plain/red back. Large

Ness' Crinkle Blue (8136) 01/19/1995 (D. Ness) Double dark blue star/thin white edge. Dark green, quilted, serrated/red back. Semiminiature

Powwow (7708) 06/15/1992 (K. Stork) Semidouble red pansy. Variegated green and cream, plain. Standard

Precious Pink (6025) 07/05/1985 (H. Pittman) Semidouble pink. Variegated, plain. Semiminiature (DAVS 913, TX Hyb)

Rob's Boolaroo (8053) 03/05/1994 (R. Robinson) Semidouble light pink sticktite pansy/bright blue fantasy. Medium green, quilted. Semiminiature trailer

Tiger (3433) 06/01/1978 (I. Fredette) Semidouble dark blue-violet. Variegated. Large

Ness' Satin Rose (8144) 01/19/1995 (D. Ness) Double rose-mauve two-tone star. Dark green, quilted, scalloped/red back. Semiminiature

Rob's Chilly Willy (9461) 07/30/2005 (R. Robinson) Double silver-white star/medium blue overlay, edge. Crown variegated medium green and white, pointed. Miniature

Shirl's Hawaiian Lei (9372) 09/30/2004 (S. Sanders) Single purple pansy/white eye. Var-

iegated medium green and white, heart shaped. Miniature

Cirelda (3620) 03/07/1979 (P. Tracey) Double pink two-tone. Quilted. Semiminiature trailer
Granger's Wonderland (3419) 05/01/1978 (Eyerdom) Semidouble light blue frilled. Plain, ruffled. Large

Jolly Jubilee (9908) 03/07/2008 (H. Pittman) Single-semidouble purple pansy. Crown variegated medium green and gold, plain. Miniature (DAVS 1655)

Jolly Frills (9907) 03/07/2008 (H. Pittman) Semidouble burgundy-red frilled/white edge.

Variegated dark green and white, wavy. Semi-miniature (DAVS 1646)

Jolly Orchid (9719) 01/15/2007 (H. Pittman) Double orchid and white pansy. Medium green, plain, quilted. Miniature

Optimara Rose Quartz (6969) 11/19/1988 (Holtkamp) Single-semidouble pink. Medium green, ovate, pointed, glossy, hairy. Miniature

Rebel's Splatter Kake (8695) 01/31/1998 (R. Bann) Single-semidouble pink large fluted star/darker eye, purple fantasy, white green edge. Medium green spooned, quilted, glossy, serrated/red back. Large



Hello from New Mexico

By Dolores "Dodie" Nelson

I was able to go to the Nashville AVSA Convention and enjoyed it very much, although I didn't go on the tour to the Holtkamp greenhouses. My favorite image was the violet "banjo," provided by the Holtkamps! It was so fitting! I went to Tennessee to visit a friend, hoping I could entice her to go with me. We had both moved away from Orange County, California. I retired from my teaching job to come to Taos, New Mexico, a chance to get away from the big city, and African violets do grow anywhere!

Before I left Southern California, I gave away all my violets, but kept a *Kohleria* and an *Achimenes*, (which took a beating, but didn't expire in the car on the 1,000 mile trip.) I started my collection again with a *Codonanthe*, and one semi-miniature green-edged blossom with variegated leaves. Unfortunately, I had lost the name tag when my cat knocked it over. I potted the plant and tented it because it had broken at the crown, and had no roots left. I also potted a small flower stalk that seemed to have one leaf.

The sunlight here is very intense, so I put a bed sheet on my southern exposure and the

plants loved it. Months passed, and the violet took root. The flower stalk, which was not tented, grew leaves and bloomed. The original plant also started producing new leaves that were very faint in variegation, but no blooms. I read an article by Pat Hancock about the "Propagation of Fantasies" in the May/June 2014 issue of *African Violet Magazine* and yes, the bloom stem retains the variegation better than the plant! I was surprised that I actually saw the results of this research on my own—with the help of the AVM; this is reason enough to read the articles instead of just looking at the beautiful pictures!

I love the AVM, and the society. I had not been a member for a number of years until I attended the convention in Nashville and, naturally, wanted to join again. I had completed some training to become a Judge several years ago. Possibly there is some evidence of that, and I could take up where I left off. I hope to help in the 2016 Albuquerque Convention. (I am actually getting credit with the Master Gardener program locally for writing this article; what an opportunity!)

How Can Our Local African Violet Clubs Encourage New Members... and Make a Difference in Someone's Life?

By Billy Deville
Jacksonville, AR

It is my belief that there are many ways this question can be answered, but I want to share one very special way; my own personal experience.

Many years ago, when I was a boy of sixteen years, I was extremely shy, almost an introvert. I had a very unhappy home life, was often told that I could do nothing and would never amount to anything. I don't usually share this personal information, but feel that I must, to make my point with this article.

One day, my Sunday school teacher had a party for our class at her home. She was quite the forthright person, and an African violet

grower. I walked into her house and saw a bright light in her dining room. My attention was immediately captured, and I will never forget the sight of a room full of shelves with fluorescent lights – and African violets! I had never seen African violets growing before!

I had always grown many different kinds of plants, but never African violets. I was just amazed by the beauty of these fuzzy-leaved little plants. I asked my teacher about the plants, and, of course, she was more than eager to tell me about them!

Is it hard for anyone to believe that when I left her house that evening, I carried small plants and several leaves? I think not! She also gave me in-

structions on how to keep them properly labeled, and other bits of knowledge on how to care for these lovely plants.

She also mentioned that she belonged to an African violet club, and they were having a meeting soon. She offered me a ride to the meeting, and I was elated beyond belief. I, of course, accepted the invitation. It was so hard to believe that someone was doing something for me!

Time has a way of passing exceedingly slow when one is waiting for something special to happen, but the time finally came for the club meeting. We arrived, and I have to say, I was quite nerv-

ous. As we walked into the meeting place, I looked around. I saw several elderly ladies (they would not be so elderly to me today). I actually thought, "Oh no, this is just a bunch of old ladies, how can I enjoy this?" Little did I know, and again, little did I know! They were the most gracious, sweet, kind, thoughtful ladies in the world! After I was introduced to them, an older man and a somewhat younger man came in, and I met them. All in all, we were from ninety to sixteen years old! I was the baby! Was I ever spoiled! I had been so starved for love and attention, and I enjoyed it very much!

From this very first meeting, those ladies and gentlemen treated me as an equal, if not elevated



Billy Deville in his plant room

a little bit! I joined their club that first night. As time went on, we talked, visited, and shared African violets. I soon had a large collection, for me, of about one hundred plants, plus leaves, and more leaves. I was in violet heaven!

After a few months passed, the more experienced members began to talk about having an accredited African violet show. I had no idea what they were talking about.

These kind friends, who were my fellow club members, filled me in on what a show was, and all it entailed.

"Well, that leaves me out," I said. "I can't grow anything *that* good!"

They assured me that I could, and kept on until I agreed to grow something for the show.

And, I began to get excited about the show! I got the Show Schedule, and began to grow something for every class...some had to be growing in the same container for three months, and so on. I was so happy, and much more self-confident. Why so? Because of my kind, loving, sincere club members and friends.

When show time finally arrived, I was worked up in a frenzy. I loaded up my entries, and took them to the show location, a very nice community center. The theme of our show was, "Treasures of the Sea." It was exciting, interesting, and so much fun! None of my fellow members had



Billy's plant 'Tiger'

entries!

(That one got a red).

After the show, everyone came around to congratulate me. I did the same for them. It was such a wonderful, happy time with African violets.

I feel that we should always be kind and courteous to each other, and then when we meet someone new, we will automatically be kind, friendly, and courteous to them. If they are new to our wonderful hobby, we should be ready to help them and teach them. Maybe even put ourselves out a little, be patient, give a little extra time and energy to help these wonderful beginners.

And who knows, these new beginners may still be growing African violets forty-six, or more, years from now! I know it's possible, because it was wonderful, caring, encouraging African violet people who helped a lonely, unhappy, sixteen-year-old find purpose and happiness, in an otherwise miserable life.

anything but praise for everything I entered. There was competition, but it was carried on in such a way that all were pulling for each other.

One of my dear friends won Queen of the Show, with '*Chanticleer*.' It was beautiful, about sixteen inches in diameter, and very near flawless.

Some things are hard to believe, but I got a blue ribbon on all but one of my

Accessing the Member section of the AVSA Website

The 'username' is **member**, and the password is the **last word of the President's message in the current issue of the AVM.**

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Carruth, AVSA Office Manager, (409) 839-4725, or Email avsas@earthlink.net.

The Violet Network

By Jennie Lawrence

Email: missjennae@yahoo.com

The Violet Barn

Home of Rob's African Violets...anyone who has been associated with violets for any length of time is probably familiar with The Violet Barn, Dr. Ralph (Rob) Robinson and Olive Ma Robinson. This is where the popular, award-winning Rob's and Ma's violets come from. A great website showcases the couple and their business. It can easily be found by doing an online search for The Violet Barn. The web address can be found below.

For those that are not familiar with the Violet Barn, or those that want to know more about the Robinsons, clicking on the "About" tab on the website will provide insight to their backgrounds in the plant industry, and the history of their business.

While African violets are the main focus of this business, a quick glance at the online catalog shows much more. The large assortment of available plants also includes gesneriads, begonias, hoyas, and miniature terrarium plants. Books, supplies, and gift certificates are available. A returning feature is jewelry.

While the company has the web site with the goal of selling plants and supplies, education is an important feature, too. The easy-to-navigate site addresses many questions and problems both the novice and experienced grower might encounter.

One of the most enjoyable features on the site is the blog. Rob tells it like it is in the world of commercial plant production and sales. An excellent blog entry is titled, "Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow...." The feelings expressed in this entry echo the sentiments of many of us who live in a frozen, winter wonderland for the majority of the year. It also gives us a glance at how



Rob got started in the plant industry.

Those who are interested in social media can follow the Violet Barn on both Facebook and Pinterest. The latter features great photos of new plants. There are links to both of these sites. Once there, the viewer has the option to "repin" Pinterest pins, or an option to "like" the Facebook page.

The Plant Care tab is wonderfully informative. The Lessons section is filled with informative photos and directions about all aspects of violet care. The Library section has links to back issues of the newsletter, "VioletsFun," and various articles. The FAQ link is an alphabetical listing of just about any plant question one could possibly think of.

Comments from customers are encouraged. A click of this tab provides an interesting read. While most of the comments are positive, there are a few that can be considered constructive criticism. These are not hidden or ignored, but are posted along with an appropriate response.

Customers can earn a free plant with their order by writing a review. After clicking on the view catalog tab, three smiling stars can be found. These stars provide directions for getting a free plant.

The News and Calendar tab lets the viewer know what is new, along with a listing of events the Robinson's will be attending in the near future. There is a Good News section with show results, awards won, and links to a congratulations section.

Visitors are welcome at the Violet Barn. Whether garden clubs want to tour, or an individual is filling a wish list, all are welcome. More information on arranging a visit is available under the Visit Us tab.

A more recent addition from The Violet Barn is

the opportunity to receive their newsletter, "VioletsFun" via email. It is always a joy to open email and see something fun to read. The newsletter introduces new plants, discusses news in the violet oriented world, features a calendar of upcoming events, answers a question of the month, and has a growing tip of the month. To

receive the newsletter, simply sign up on the website. Click on the appropriate tab, and follow the directions.

The Violet Barn's website can be accessed at www.violetbarn.com or via snail-mail at P.O. Box 9, Naples, NY 14512.

Levels of Giving



Thumbprint
(Under \$25)



Two-tone
(\$25 - 49)



Multicolor
(\$50 - \$99)



Geneva
(\$100-\$499)



Fantasy
(\$500 - \$999)



Chimera
(Over \$1000)

ATTENTION: JUDGES

THIS REPLACES THE "ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES" PUBLISHED IN THE SHOWS & JUDGES COLUMN IN THE PREVIOUS AVM AND ONE ADDITIONAL RULE CHANGE.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SELECT TOP AWARD WINNERS

The awards for best miniature, best semiminia-
ture, and best standard shall be for single-crowned
specimens and shall be selected from respective
collection class, best in class, new cultivars or un-
usual container. A new cultivar or an unusual con-
tainer specimen shall be judged again using the
scale of points used in the regular classes.

**(NOTE: Point-scoring of new cultivars or
unusual container specimens is required
when an entry in either of these two classes
is being considered for any top award.)**

The award for best trailer shall be selected from
collections, best in class winners from all trailer
classes, new cultivars, or unusual container
classes. A trailer in an unusual container or new
cultivar being considered for best trailer or best in

show shall be judged again using the regular scale
of points used for judging trailers in the regular
classes. **(A trailer can be best in show, but
cannot be best standard, best miniature, or
best semiminia-)**

The best Saintpaulia species shall be selected
from collections or from best in classes for species
or best in show, shall be judged again using the
scale of points for judging species. **(A Saintpau-
lia species can be best in show, but cannot be
best standard, best miniature, best semi-
miniature or best trailer.)**

**(NOTE: point-scoring of new cultivars or
unusual container specimens is required
when an entry in either of these two classes
is being considered for any top award.)**

Please delete Rule 1 at the top of page 71 in the
Handbook and replace it with the following:

Some growers may wish to exhibit established
gardens, and schedule chairmen should be careful,
if class titles are assigned, so that these established
gardens can easily be adapted to fit the class titles.

Converting a Kitchen/Dining Room into a Plant Room

by Sylvia A. Farnum, PhD
safarnum@aol.com

Time passes and our collections of treasured African Violets grow. Have we planned the space we need to care for them?

The space you can use for growing plants depends on what type of home, apartment, condo, or room you have. Everyone will have different growing spaces and temperature and humidity conditions.

Our first violet-growing space was a double wooden shelf that held eight violets that my husband put up in the spare bedroom in a rental house. Over the next years, we moved several times. Next, we used a home-built rack in a bedroom; then, in two homes we used basement space. At our lake home when we lived close enough to go there every weekend, summer, and winter, we had shelves in front of the windows. None of these places had really convenient plant potting areas. In one home, I had to pot on a board that I placed over the washer and dryer. It was at a back-breaking height, and I had to carry water from the bathroom.

All the while, my collection of African violets grew, requiring more racks and more space.

When we purchased our present home, we felt it had to have a convenient space for growing African violets. We were lucky enough to find a home we liked that has an extra kitchen-dining room combination. In fact, it has a whole apartment on the lower level of our home.

We looked at the space and saw that, with a little work, it could become the plant room of our dreams.

The area was definitely "kitchen," with old fashioned white vinyl on the floor, and a kitchen wallpaper, with pictures of teapots on the walls. But, there were big cupboards in dark wood, an old dishwasher, and quite a lot of counter space.

The first thing that we did was change the flooring from vinyl to ceramic tile. After doing a lot of

looking, we located a big batch of hefty swimming pool tile in a pattern that looked less like a kitchen and more like a plant room. It would be sturdy enough to hold our four big rolling violet racks and was inexpensive because it had been rejected by the original person that ordered it. We had the tile installed in the hallway leading past the bathroom to the plant room and in the plant room. We painted over the wallpaper on the walls and installed a wall of white bookshelves to hold our violet reference books and my collection of African Violet Magazines and catalogs, going back to when I joined the AVSA in 1963.



Table and bookshelves in plant room

The lighting needed to be changed. The dining area was kind of dark, so we added a track light. We installed shop lights, one under the cabinets and one over the deep window above the sink.

We added an old microwave. We also have a refrigerator and a gas stove in the area. When we first moved into the house, we had frequent power outages, so the gas stove was something we wanted, since we have an electric range in our upstairs kitchen. The adjacent living room has a fireplace. We converted it to gas. Now it is an area that we can close off and heat with the fireplace during power outages in winter. There are two doors into the living room from the plant room. Our racks can be rolled into the living room in an emergency. We

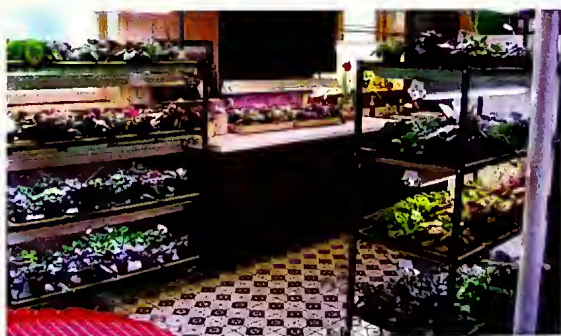
would probably have to remove some of the living room furniture, but it is an option. We have never had to do that, but it is comforting to have it available.

We placed a table and chairs in front of the bookcases, so I can keep records and work at the table, if I wish. In fact, for some time, I potted plants there. It is a pleasant place to sit with a friend and talk about violets, or just sit to look at the racks of plants. We can also serve afternoon coffee or a luncheon there.

The cupboards are perfect for pot, fertilizer, and tray storage. I also store paper towels, tape, wicks, tools, and cleaning supplies there.

We installed a double stainless steel sink to replace a very old one. I use it to give my plants a bath, to wash smaller tools and extra items, and to draw water for my plants. I heat water in the microwave in three glass measuring pitchers to moderate the temperature of our well water, since we have a water softener and can only use the cold water from the tap.

Above the sink, in the large window, my husband added a shelf. That way, with the shelf and the windowsill, I can have four full-size trays there, except in winter, when it is too cold. That has been a good place to start leaves and sometimes nurture baby plants in covered trays.



Plant room counter area

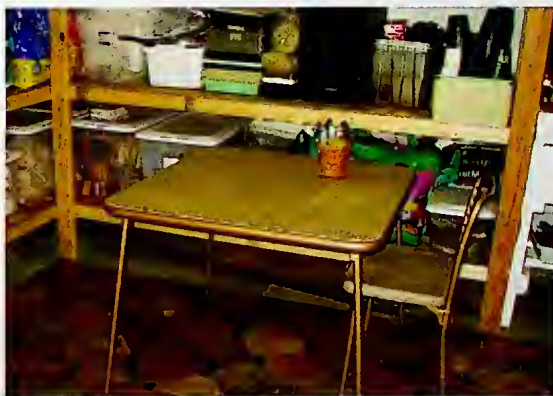


Plant room showing 3 of 4 racks

The plant room connects with a laundry area and a furnace room. After a few years, my husband was tired of cleaning up my potting mess. He started putting a large canvas tarp on the floor for me to walk on when I potted plants. I stumbled around on it for a few potting sessions, then I decided to try potting in another area. I moved to the furnace room.

It doesn't sound as though that would be a nice place to spend hours potting, but having a separate area for potting outside the violet room has proven to be very convenient.

We set up a card table and chair in the furnace room in front of a large storage shelf. The storage shelf is perfect for storing the large trays, domes, bags of Perlite and potting soil, the mixing bin, and some of the pots. There is a shop light over it. Just lately, our carpenter put down a vinyl floor in that space using some waste pieces of vinyl. There is also a pair of laundry tubs in the room that my husband uses to wash pots and clean trays. We can step through the laundry room outside to carry out the used soil and leaves for composting. We take dirty trays outside and use the hose to rinse them.



Potting area in furnace room

The best thing about having a separate potting area is that no one expects to visit our furnace room. We can keep the violet room neat and attractive for ourselves and for visitors, and the potting area can be left in the middle of a messy project and no one sees it.

Since growing African violets has been a large part of our hobby life for years, we felt it was worth the effort to set up a convenient, attractive growing area. Our four, six-foot racks pretty

much fill the available space. We have made a huge effort to keep our violet collection to below 125 plants per rack, with a few extra trays on the counters and in the window, except during winter.

Converting our spare kitchen/dining space to

our violet room did not get done at once. We have gradually improved the space as we were able to afford to make the changes. We are very happy with the result. It makes caring for our plants so much easier.

The ASPCAV

By Sharon Rosenzweig

You have all heard of the ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). Well, I am a charter member of the ASPCAV, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to African Violets. Whenever I see an African violet that is suffering, I offer to rescue it, nurse it back to health, and return it to its original owner, or adopt it out.

When I was working, I ran an African violet hospital on the windowsill next to my cubicle. There were usually three to four plants there at a time. No one in the office objected, except the window washers.

One holiday season, my bank decided to display a dish garden with an African violet in the center. Over the course of the year, I watched the plants die until only the African violet was left. The leaves looked good, but the plant never bloomed again. I offered to take it and return it to the bank when it was blooming. To my surprise, they agreed. After four months of nurturing, I brought the plant back with a lovely head of bloom. While the staff "oohed" and "aahed," no one wanted the responsibility of keeping the plant healthy. They gave it

up for adoption.

Besides the sheer joy of rejuvenating an African violet plant, there can be other rewards as well. I collect violet-decorated porcelain objects and frequent a local consignment shop. While paying for a "new find," the cashier asked me if I liked violets. He proceeded to tell me that he took his grandmother's beloved African violet in 1998 when she passed away. He admitted that the plant hadn't been repotted or fertilized since then.

I offered to take it and repot it for him. The plant had four crowns and was a mess. I was able to return two lovely plants to him in full bloom. He was so grateful that he told me to pick out something in the store as a thank you from him. So, I came home with another porcelain, violet-decorated treasure!

I have discovered there are different kinds of people in the world - those who rescue animals, and those who rescue African violets, and probably many who do both!

From *Ye Bay Stater*, Publication of the Bay State AVS

RHIZOMATOUS PLANTS

By Leonie Chirgwin

Rhizomatous plants die back after flowering and then have a dormant period. Some growers leave the rhizomes in the pot during this dormant period, but most people harvest the rhizomes at the end of the growing cycle.

When the flowers on rhizomatous plants have died, start reducing the water to them to just a slosh occasionally. The when the foliage starts to die, stop the water altogether. A few days later, cut the foliage off at the soil level, and then tip the potting mix out onto a newspaper or a tray.

Now scratch around the potting mix with your fingers and find all the rhizomes.

Put them in a plastic zip lock bag, labeled with the plant's name, and add about two tablespoons of vermiculite. Add a very small amount of water, close the bag, and then store the bag in a warm spot.

Around late winter to early spring, you will see some growth begin at the end of each rhizome, and it's time to plant again!

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

Ice Cream!

By Sharon Corton

People constantly tell me that they lose weight in the summer months. Not me! I gain weight! No matter how active I am with gardening, walking the dogs, etc; I still gain weight. Why? Because I love ice cream! So, I figured a way to make all that ice cream work for me (don't you love recycling?). Several years ago, we started to get take-out ice cream, and guess what that meant?! I got styrofoam ice cream containers (ICC) with clear dome tops! What a gift. I have been collecting take-out ICCs for a few years now, and after washing them, I reuse them in the violet room.

When I put down leaves, I put my little 1 oz. containers with the starter leaf in it into its own ICC. It has its own little area for growing which keeps the plants, or leaf, clean, and in its own humidity. I also use the ICC for the plantlets I get from the leaves. You can reuse the containers forever. It's easy to water the seedlings/plantlets. Just lift up the dome. You can get various size containers, depending if you get a baby, small, medium, or large ice cream.

I am curious about the gene pool of chimeras, so I've been working on hybridizing mine. Many of the crosses have taken. I germinate the seeds in a container with seed starter and place it in its own ICC "incubator." When ready to be individually potted, I put the little seedlings and their cups, in which I plant them, into a recycled ICC. The seedlings seem to grow faster this way. When I repotted the seedlings (all twenty-eight of them!) into 2 oz. containers, I put each back in its own ICC. To get a jump start on the F2 plants (second generation seedlings), I put down some small/seed leaves as I transplanted the seedling. They went into their own 1oz. plastic container and into an ICC. The leaves seem to develop plantlets faster this way. All but two of the seed leaves are producing plantlets in record time. (I wrote an article some years back about putting down seed leaves to get plantlets. I have found that they are faster to

produce plantlets than a bigger leaf). The seedlings haven't even bloomed yet!

When I have a plant that I'm concerned about, it goes into an ICC. I don't isolate new plants in the standard way. I just put them into an ICC for three to four months, and put them on the regular shelves with my other violets. I am very proud of the fact that I HAVE NO BUGS. If I ever decide to show my plants, when they return "home" I will take them down nearly to the crown, and put them in their own ICC for a few months.

I have found that the recycled use of these containers with domes, is almost endless, and my ICCs are used for various tasks; not just the ones stated above. I use one to hold water and my ear bulb for watering seedlings. I use one to hold toothpicks in the violet area (I frequently use tooth picks with the violets. I put one gently down in the soil and pull it out to see if the soil is moist or needs watering). I use an ICC to soak wicks before I use them. I have been known to plant a violet directly into the bottom of an ICC if it's the right cup size for a violet. That also gives me the option of covering the plant with the dome. I also plant suckers and then put that unit into an ICC, until it is ready to come out.

Hybridized and germinated seedlings in their containers go under the lights. I also find that the plantlets/seedlings do wonderfully well in their ICC. It creates a fabulous environment for the violets. The seeds seem to germinate quickly, the leaves produce babies quicker, they grow faster in their containers, and they need less watering. I can keep an eye on the ones in ICCs because it is easy to see through the clear dome.

But, the best thing of all is that my husband and I get to eat the ice cream! Lose weight in summer? Not in this house!

From *Ye Bay Stater*, Publication of the Bay State AVS



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

EK-Goluboglazaia

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis

Hybridized by: E. Korshunova

Standard

Fountains, Food, and Fun in Kansas City

By Kent Stork

African violet lovers will gather together May 24-31, 2015 in Kansas City, Missouri, to celebrate "Violets Love KC Jazz, Blues, and Barbecue." As always, the main focus of an AVSA convention will be the beautiful plants, along with the warmth of friendships old and new. But what are other draws in the Kansas City area that will enhance the convention experience? Let's take a look at a few things that await those who travel there.

Fountains

Iconic photos of Kansas City will invariably include one of the city's majestic fountains. Hundreds of the aquatic showpieces grace the city, hence its moniker, 'The City of Fountains.' The first fountains, back in the late 1800's were installed to serve dogs, horses, and birds. The city then erected even more in distinctive styles to provide citizens with safe drinking water. As time passed, showpiece fountains with elaborate statuary, some made in places like Paris and Venice, were added. One of the most recognizable landmarks is the J. C. Nichols Memorial Fountain with its four horses and riders that is situated near the Country Club Plaza.

Food

While foods of all types and national origins may be enjoyed in the city, the words "Kansas City" and "barbecue" are synonymous. Mouth-watering, slow-smoked meats in spicy tomato-based sauces are served in over a hundred barbecue establishments throughout the metro

area. In the early 1900's, Henry Perry began barbecuing in an outdoor pit next to his streetcar barn. With its enormous success, it wasn't long before others copied his technique and styled their own unique recipes and offerings. The easy availability of hardwoods in the area, like oak and hickory, along with the city's history as a meat-packing center, helped barbecue become the world-renowned cuisine of the Kansas City area.

Fun

Noteworthy attractions in the city include the highly respected Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the outstanding National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial, the Country Club Plaza shopping and entertainment district, and the beautiful historic Union Station.

Other special destinations included in convention tours will be the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, the Harley-Davidson factory, the old river town of Weston, Missouri, and Bird's Botanicals with 10,000 orchids and other plants being grown in an underground paradise in limestone caves below the city. And more fun is in store with an evening excursion to the New Dinner Theatre for a lively production of the musical "Hairspray."

Breathtaking fountains, delicious barbecued foods, and fabulous fun with other violet growers will be waiting for you! Join us at the Kansas City Airport Holiday Inn and the adjacent KCI Expo Center to experience it all!



"And the winners are ..." 434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

By Mary J. Corondan

Email: mcorondan@yahoo.com

AV AND GESNERIAD SOCIETY OF SYRACUSE, NY – Winners:

Best AVSA Standard Collection: Maggie Lee, Rosie Ruffles, French Kiss; Best Trailer: Yesterday's Cherry Cola; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Robin and Bill Yager**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Splashy, Thunder Surprise, Old Fashioned Rose; Design Sweepstakes, **Barbara Leonard**. 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Optimara Little Creek, Jolly Maiden, Rob's Boondoggle, **Donna Coleman**. Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Jolly Frills; Best Standard: Neptune; Best Miniature: Precious Red; Best Design, **Lee Hoke**. Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha* subspecies *ionantha* var. *ionantha*, **Ann Kelly**. Best Gesneriad: *Primulina gemella*, **Mary Ryan**.



METROPOLITAN ST. LOUIS AVS, MO – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Cajun's Fair Maiden, Ma's Arctic Sky; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Winnergreen, Jolly Frills, Thunder Surprise; Best Standard: Cajun's Fair Maiden; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Fran Russom**. Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Eyes, Ness'

Crinkle Blue, Jolly Fire; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Optimara Little Azurite; Best Semiminiature: Jolly Fire, **Susan Hapner**. Best Species Collection: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone Cha Simba, *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone House of Amani; *Saintpaulia* 5c1 clone *ionantha*; Best Gesneriad: *Primulina* 'Nakako'; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* 8 clone Cha Simba; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Gary Dunlap**. Best Trailer: Rob's Galiwinku, **Ron Masa**.

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Multicolor

African Violet Society of Philadelphia, PA
In memory of Bob Duffy, husband of our long-time member, Margaret Duffy



Two-Tone

Caroline Storey, San Marcos, TX



Thumbprint

Marvin K Nester, Lakeland, FL
Cathy O'Rear, Hazel Green, AL
Suet Lai Yeung Rosetta, Tai Wai, N.T. Hong Kong

In Memory

Abigail K. Sullivan

Abigail K. Sullivan passed away in June, 2014, at the age of 90.

She was a Life Member of AVSA for over sixty years. Most of her active years, including the position of club President, were

with the North-Shore AVS on Long Island, New York.

Her children have fond memories of AVSA conventions and activities, which took them as a family to different parts of the country.

SETTING UP A TERRARIUM: PART 1

By Clare O'Shea

Terrariums have been around for nearly 200 years. They are the ultimate in low-maintenance gardening and recycling - the plants recycle their own oxygen, carbon dioxide and water. They isolate the plants from drafts and changes in air temperature, and the isolation keeps pests and diseases to a minimum. They are the perfect garden for just about everyone - those away from home frequently, move house often, flat dwellers, the house-bound, children, the elderly, the busy, nursing home dwellers - and they make a terrific gift for those experiencing a lengthy stay in hospital (much better value for money than a bouquet of flowers).

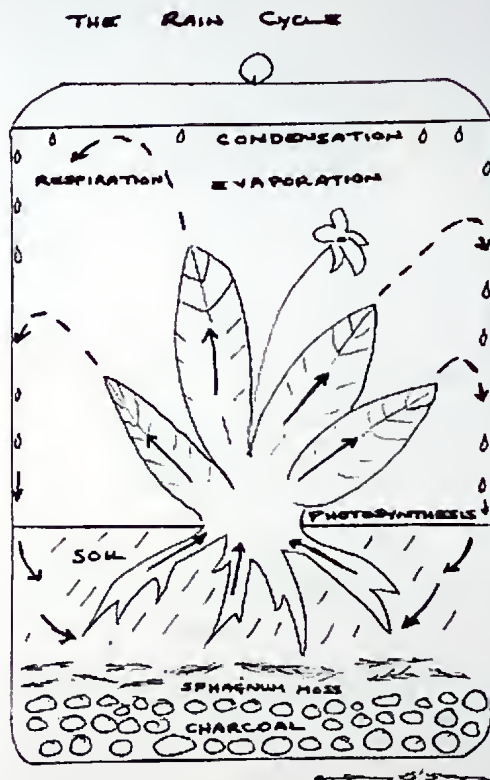
They can be used in various ways. As a nursery for propagating and raising baby plants, a hospital for ailing plants, a controlled constant environment for some of the more difficult to grow plants in our 'foreign' environment, an entry in a plant show, and as a decorative feature in our home. These last two uses are the most enticing and look quite magical. After a bad day, I often wish I could shrink and live in there away from the troubles of my world! While terrariums and their fairy landscapes can look quite magical, there is nothing magical about how they work. It is purely scientific. So before we plunge right in setting one up, let us begin by learning the science behind it. If we can understand this we will have much greater success in the long run.

The Science Behind the Magic

Terrariums control their own atmosphere, sustain a rain cycle, and stabilize the indoor temperature. Light entering the terrarium induces the plants to grow. As part of the process of photosynthesis, they draw available water from the soil through their roots, and transpire water vapor out through their leaves. The moisture/vapor is unable to escape due to the sealed nature of the terrarium.

As the air temperature outside is generally cooler, the evaporated vapor is cooled on contact with the walls and ceiling of the terrarium and is

condensed and returned to its liquid state (the water droplets you will observe in the terrarium). These droplets trickle down to the soil and the cycle begins again.



This is known as the 'rain cycle' and must be maintained for optimum growing conditions. If the outside temperature rises, moisture will evaporate to be condensed when the temperature falls. A high level of humidity is maintained, and the rain cycle keeps moisture at a constant level. Interior temperatures are stabilized by the container, which separates plants from fluctuating outside temperatures. Take the lid off a terrarium, and you will notice the air inside is much warmer and moist than out.

...To Be Continued

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

Technically Speaking...or Not

By Neil Lipson

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Diagnosing Cyclamen Mites and Botrytis

It's been 20 years since I wrote an article on cyclamen mites and botrytis, so it really needed an update with the introduction of newer miticides and fungicides. In Helen Van Pelt's book "THE AFRICAN VIOLETS", she says "mites are so easy to kill," and she's right. However, you will need some advice on this. I've only had mites once since I've been growing violets and other plants, so the lessons I learned stayed with me. These two problems look similar, so here's what I found. Let's talk about mites first after determining what you probably have, and then we'll discuss botrytis.

The one time I had this problem I noticed tight, grayish, hairy centers on about 25% of my plants. It started with a few plants and then slowly spread to the ones next to it. The mites will go from plant to plant through the leaves. I know that mites are very small and hide from the light, so you don't look for mites, but the symptoms. Botrytis, being a fungus, begins during the fall when temperature changes occur. It produces the same off-colored centers of the plants as mites, but is not as hairy. Because the new leaves emerging from the centers were distorted, I finally decided it was cyclamen mites and treated them.

Today, you would use either Avid, Forbid, or Conserve SC which some growers believe that one good spraying will do the job. Avid and all the other insecticides should be used with precautions. It is also important that all of the stated insecticides in this article must be used in strict accordance to the product label and to make sure the plant you are treating is listed as such. While Forbid and Conserve SC are very safe, Avid does require more safeguards, so if you plan to use Avid, which is highly effective, make certain you read and understand the recommendations on the product



label and comply with them.

I spoke to Optimara Holtkamp African Violets, and was told that mites are more common with growers and botrytis is more common with commercial growers. I really haven't heard of botrytis with any of my grower friends, so the discussion here is more for reference, as I'm sure some of the growers out there will see it.

In researching what was causing the distorted centers, I should discuss that mites and botrytis damage look similar. However, botrytis will give soft mushy centers, while mites would give hard, brittle-type leaves, which is what I had. You cannot easily see mites with the naked eye, and even experts complain that with a microscope or loupe, they hide from the light. The dead giveaway was this very dull, gray appearance, smack in the center of the plant. Because mites move from touching leaves from other plants, you can have one shelf infected and not another. Another very obvious symptom is a curved or twisted leaf and flower stems, which are



Mite Damage

distorted from the toxins that the mites inject into the plant, but this will not show up for a couple of weeks. With today's chemicals depending on the plant, I would use either Avid, Forbid or Conserve and then add wetting agent, like a couple drops of soap detergent. Some growers have had success with neem oil. Because mites congregate near the center of the plant, you must really soak the centers. However, you must be careful that water does not collect there, or you will get crown rot (not too common). I figured with the soap, the water does not bubble up, and flows evenly and down off the plant instead of collecting there. It worked perfectly. No mites and no crown rot.

For Avid, my recommended dosage is 1/4 teaspoon per gallon of water. If you are using a standard 22 oz. spray bottle, it is about 2 drops. Avid requires some caution, as Forbid is safer, but I sprayed the plants late at night and left the room after closing the door. Toxicity will drop substantially by the morning.

Once you are finished spraying, throw away the rest of the diluted mix you just prepared, and mix it fresh each time. The shelf life of the diluted mix is less than a day. The concentrate lasts for probably a few years. If you want to apply another treatment, then in the warm months, you would spray about every 5 days, and for the cold months, about every 10 days for 3 times total. To be thorough, you must spray the entire collection as they will travel on your hands, water cans, and from leaves touching. If, however, you have your violets in separate rooms, it is possible that you may not have to do these plants. Only treat plants in the same room. Avid is translaminar, which means it will penetrate the leaf. This is as close to a systemic as you can get. It will not get to the roots, but that is not where the problem is. I put on a long-sleeved shirt, wear a surgical mask, disposable surgical gloves, and go to work.

The nice thing about most insecticides is that the concentration drops off rapidly in the first few hours (an exponential drop), so your exposure the next day is minimal, if anything. If you are sensitive or allergic, that is another matter, and



Mite Damage 2

even miniscule amounts can cause an allergic reaction. Be careful handling the concentrate, as this is where you will get most of your exposure. Some experts spray once a month as a preventative, but if you have no mites, and are careful about introducing new plants, you may never have to spray after this. I only spray plants that are coming into the collection and keep them bagged for a period of time.

I do so by putting the plant into a freezer bag with a small opening in it, spray the plant and then immediately close the bag. If your plants are clean, and you are careful to isolate and spray the incoming plants, you really have no need to do routine spraying. By the way, even if you isolate new plants, and forget to wash your hands, you can still infect your collection.

Now that the mites are dead, what do we do? Well, even after they are dead, there still are some toxins in the center leaves, which will grow, but deformed, giving you the impression you still have mites when you actually do not. Keep picking off the distorted leaves over a period of a few weeks until you get normal ones, and then you are set to go. You may also report at this time to give your plant a fresh start.

I don't see a need to dip the plant into a solution for mites, but a thorough spraying should do the job. Don't forget the gloves, long sleeves, and a cheap surgical, disposable mask. If you do this, you'll never have to worry about toxicity

with them.

Botrytis

Botrytis is a fungus which occurs during periods of high humidity or where some of the plants are not getting good circulation.

I have many of my plants under hoods with near 100% humidity and no circulation, and they have never contracted botrytis. I personally have never seen a case of it. The problem that all growers have, including myself, is isolating the problem when there are 3 or 4 possible causes.

Yes, you can send the plant in for analysis, but they will not return it after they do give you a hard diagnosis. Most growers will toss the plant if they have backups. If it's a rare chimera, you will probably want to try to save the plant one way or another. You would be smart to isolate it during this process.

Mites are much less common than thrips, and will not spread INSV. Some growers suspected that they do, but the phytopathologists I have spoken to

tell me it is not possible.

Conclusion

Mites are very curable, usually with one or two sprayings. They are far less severe than thrips or mealy bugs, which can take a month or more to eradicate. Botrytis is rare for the average grower. You really have to know the symptoms to solve either problem.

Because this article was written to discuss treatment of mites in many conditions of different types of growers for not only African Violets, but many other plants, I will re-emphasize that it is important to apply the insecticide in strict accordance to the product label and to make sure the plant and conditions you are treating is listed as such on the label.

I would like to thank Carolee Carter for her help and expertise in not only proofing my works, but giving tips on what growers need to know.

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GESNERIADS

By Charles Lawn

Gesneriads like to be fed regularly and often.

Check the label on the fertilizer packet you purchase. If it gives you directions for "constant feeding," follow those instructions. If it quotes you to feed once a month, cut that solution down to 1/4 strength, and water once a week.

Feeding your plants a large dose of fertilizer once a month is not a good idea.

Keep your Gesneriads evenly moist. This means "water them when they want it." As you know if you have grown many houseplants, most of them don't go dry at the same time.

My *Achimenes* and *Achimenanthas* take on a little more water than *kohlerias* and *smithianthas*, etc., maybe because of the size of the containers we grow them in. It appears to me that *Achimenes* and *Achimenanthas* do better in a shallow container.

Gesneriads also love humidity. Many of them come from the tropical rainforests and the higher the humidity, the better, and yet many of them have adapted very well to the lower humidity of our homes. In general, they do like humidity of 50% or higher, and this may be achieved by grouping your plants together, which increases the humidity of the air around them, or by putting your plants in trays of water, and supporting them on a bed of gravel.

During the recent hot days, I found it helpful to keep the *Achimenes* lower down in the glasshouse. This protected the flowers from marking, especially the darker ones, as in purple.

From *The African Violet*, Publication of the AV Association of Australia, Inc.

"No Child Left Behind"

By Kathy Brewster

From her CD, "Eleven Diamonds"

The thirty years I have spent as an Army spouse has brought many exciting adventures. When my husband left for overseas assignments, I plunged into projects that helped the months pass faster. That's when my attraction to African violets began. The sunlight on my husband's side of the bathroom is wonderful for violets. I took full advantage of it since he wouldn't need the counter space for a while. When I discovered a site that sold African violet leaves, I plunged in head first with no real knowledge of what I was getting myself into. I was mesmerized by all the colors and sizes. Before I knew it, I had ordered 100 different varieties. When 200 leaves arrived with instructions, I followed them precisely, and each one produced at least three babies each. By the time my husband came back from his military assignment, I had well over 600 plants. I was starting to resemble that old woman who lived in a shoe. I had so many children, I didn't know what to do. I filled the windows of the middle school where I was substitute teaching. I brightened the classrooms of many teachers, and my plants continued to multiply.

The hardest task during grooming time was to throw away excess leaves. I couldn't bring myself to discard even the worst-looking leaves. I had somehow adopted the school concept, "No child left behind." I spent the most time, it seemed, on

the weakest plants produced from old leaves. I was determined to give every little violet (no matter how weak) a chance to thrive and survive.

Leaf projects with special-needs children proved rewarding. The leaves they planted at the beginning of the school year would make nice Mother's Day gifts. Still more leaves, more babies, more time. I soon realized I was spending more time and energy finding homes for these violets and conducting leaf projects than cultivating the potential show winners I had. Enough was enough. Finally, I had reached my saturation point. I realized that no matter if a leaf had the potential of growing into a lovely plant, I couldn't save every one.

After many years of growing African violets, still today I dread tossing anything—but I do. Some I use for experimentation and leaf projects. I still share as many as I can with friends and club members. Sometimes the best intentions can go awry.

Today, when I toss those violets without show potential, I don't feel so guilty anymore since I know I'm doing the right thing. Now my time spent in the plant room can be used in more productive ways. Although the concept of, "No child left behind," could be effective in many ways in the educational system, when it comes to plants, the outcome can be disastrous.

Foliar Feeding Baby Plantlets

By Nancy Manozzi

When baby plantlets have been separated from the mother leaf, they don't always have a very well-developed root system. Newly planted leaves don't get roots for several weeks, so you might want to try foliar feeding.

If plants can't get fertilizer through the roots, they may be able to absorb it through their leaves. In fact, a study says the plant takes up 98% of the fertilizer sprayed on leaves while the roots take up much less.

Mix the fertilizer the same as for watering your plants, 1/8 or 1/4 teaspoon fertilizer to 1 gallon warm water. Pour into a spray bottle. For this solu-

tion, you should use hot water because when spraying it, you'll find that it sprays quite cooler than the real temperature because of the air.

Spray generously but not so much that the water drips off the leaves. It is safe to spray in the center, just try not to let the water accumulate there. If it does, blot with a tissue or soft paper towel.

Remember, never try a new method on your entire collection!

From *Ye Bay Stater*, Publication of the Bay State AVS

Hybridizing with Mini Sinningias

Article and Photos by Andy Kuang



Edward



Marge



Pamela

Sinningia is a genus of flowering plant in the family Gesneriaceae, the African violet family. It is probably the most popular and easiest of all gesneriads to grow after the African violet. There are about 74 species of tuberous perennials and small shrubs native to the rainforests of South America.

The first mini Sinningia hybrid, Dollbaby, which was created in 1963, is a cross between pusilla and eumorpha. This hybrid opened a whole new world to mini Sinningia growers and hybridisers.

Sinningias vary in size from 2-3 cm micro minis to 8 cm medium and large size plants. The flowers have a wide range of colour and different markings. Mini sinningia hybrids can flower all year round if they are growing in the right conditions.

Hybridising mini sinningias is fun as you can create different sizes and different colours of mini Sinningias, and some hybrids even have scent. Firstly, you need to plan what results you want to achieve. For example, you might want to create a nice compact plant with bright red flowers, or you want your hybrids to have a perfume.

Secondly, after you have made your decisions, you need to select the parent plants to achieve what you want. Select the plants with the most strongly desired characteristics. If you want a red coloured flower, you need to select both parents

with red flowers. Purple and blue are the most dominant flower colours. Normally, you would select a seed pod parent with a nice rosette symmetry leaf pattern and a pollen parent with strong flower characteristics. Then you need to grow your selected plants to the flower stage.

When the seed pod plant flower is fully open, use one hand to hold the calyx gently and lift the tube of the flower slowly upward by the other hand, pulling at the same time to remove the flower tube. Now you can see the stigma and anthers. Use the scissors to cut off the anthers to avoid self-pollinating. After about 4 days, check your flowers. When you see the stigma is opened up and shining, it is at this stage that the stigma is ready to accept the pollen. Use a paint brush or any other handy tool to apply the pollen from your selected plant to the stigma. I usually apply this two to three times to make sure that some pollen sticks on the stigma. You now need to mark the flower with a coloured string so that you don't accidentally remove it. Record both parents' details and the date of the cross. Quite often it is difficult to get two of your sinningia parents to flower at the same time. You can collect the pollen and store it for future use. I find the pollen is still viable after one year if you store it covered in dark paper and in cool conditions.

The time taken for the seed pod to mature depends on the weather. In the hot summer sea-

son, the seed pod will turn brown and split in about 30 days. In the cooler weather, the seed pod may need a little bit longer to mature. After you harvest your seed pods, let them dry out for about two weeks, after which you can collect the seeds. You can sow the fresh seeds or store them for future use.

Here are some of my own experiences hybridising with mini sinningias. I use some of the species as pollen parents to cross to the mini sinningias. I have done these hybrids: Orion cross araneosa, which produced Sinningia Marge with beautiful red flowers and PK's Nicole cross guttata, which produced Sinningia Edward which has very nice flowers with lots of dots and lines on the throat.

I also use the micro mini sinningia species pusilla White Sprite as seed pod parent crossed with other mini sinningias and species and these have produced some remarkable results. I crossed pusilla White Sprite with a seedling of (Texas Zebra x leucotricha) and created a beautiful small

size Sinningia Pamela with delicate peach pink flowers. When I crossed pusilla White Sprite with lemon scented, cream yellow flower species conspicua, I got a few seedlings from this cross which all looking similar. The size is between the micro mini and the large one, all with pale mauve flowers with some purple markings on the throat. I can smell the lemon scent from one of the seedlings.

I have tried to create some double petal mini Sinningias, but the results are not as good as I expected. I used double Sinningia Orion as seed pod parent crossed with some other mini sinningias but I only got about 10% of double sinningias. The best result is Orion crossed with Mark Twain, and I have one seedling with big purple fully double flowers. From another cross between Orion and a red seedling, I got a red double seedling.

Hybridising with mini sinningias is lots of fun, and I encourage all of you to have a go and create some beautiful hybrids of mini sinningias.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Australia



White Sprite x conspicua



Orion x Mark Twain



Orion x Red Seedling

Roots

By Mel Robey

From his book *African Violets, Gifts from Nature*

- Surface area of the roots in a two inch pot = 10.7 feet.
- Surface area of the roots in a four inch pot = 48.0 square feet
- If these roots were placed end to end, they would reach from 1.5 to 7.0 miles in length.

Underwater Designs

by Joyce Stenger

Underwater designs can be the easiest, or the most difficult, design to do for a show. Practice is the best way to learn how to create this beautiful exhibit. If you try at home, then making this design for an exhibit or show will not seem so challenging when you are "in a hurry," "nervous," or just "excited," to be creating an underwater design. An underwater design portion is very similar to the tiny designs lined up in the small niches of most shows.

Two guidelines to remember:

1. The material used in underwater designs must be able to tolerate being wet, or even submerged.
2. Containers made of glass magnify, so your design portion will appear *twice the size* that it really is.

Considerations

You must make it small enough to allow for this variation. Planning the design means having a good idea of the colors, shapes, sizes, and fillers you will need. Think through the show theme, or the reason for this exhibit. Then, your material choices can emphasize a pleasing complimentary setting and background. Ask questions about the design portion from other members or your Show Chairman. Get ideas from books. Keep the design as simple as possible because the message is "an underwater beauty," not a table-top splendor.

The size of your design depends on the height, width, and shape of the container. Most colorless clear glass containers, such as a square vase, short cookie jar, round goblet, deep mug, or angular fish bowl, can be used. Check before you start for data on the size limit; then measure your container prior to purchasing new items, or producing a design portion that may be either too small or too large. Of course, your container must be pristinely clean and clearly transparent. Rinsing glass in vinegar helps it to be crystal clear.

The principles of design are the same for underwater designs. There must be a base, line ma-

terial, filler material, and an African violet blossom or two. Use sand, gravel, glass beads, or smooth pebbles to cover the mechanics of the base inside. Do not use plastic beads, as they will float. Wash and rewash your materials until it is really clean otherwise it will cloud the water. Note that fresh floral clay might cause the water to be dull.

Violet Blossoms/Construction

The choice of violet by color and its NAME adds so much in keeping with the show theme. Double blossoms hold up better than singles, and pale blossoms bruise badly, which can be distracting. If the background is dark, select pale sand and blossoms; if the background is light, select dark sand and blossoms. This keeps the color contrast at its best.

If possible, take a fresh plant with several buds and blossoms from home; one that is not good enough to exhibit. You are allowed to buy one at a sales table, and you can do so, but it might not be very fresh, as it could have been in a box for several days.

Next, put together the mini design portion without a blossom. This is the part that is easiest. Begin with a base - a barnacle, conk shell, or small bowl up-side down. (Color and shape are irrelevant as the base will be covered and not seen.) Using a hot glue gun, glue the design portion onto the base. That portion can be a small, colorful shell, pot, or stone. After your design is glued to the base, place it on old newspaper to see if it is level; then let it dry thoroughly.

If possible, take a fresh plant with several buds and blossoms from home. Your plant can be one that is not good enough to exhibit, but okay to disbud. You are allowed to buy one at a sales table, but it might not be as fresh as one from home.

Next, you will need line and filler materials. If you use fresh materials, create your design in your hotel room early, the morning of the show.

If you use dried materials, then you can make it at home; and keep it together to take to the show with all but the fresh violet blossom.

Design Checklist

Now, your design, with dried materials, back cloth, gravel, and accessory can be carefully wrapped up in newspaper or towels, and placed inside its container for travel. Make a list of all other items that will be needed when exhibiting this design. Do not forget the glue with an extension cord, fresh green materials, pins, or tape for holding the cloth up, gravel or beads, long tweezers, or kitchen tongs for adjusting the design or picking out debris, and the two cards for writing data for judges or the general public to read.

About Water

And now, about adding water to your container: this is the hard part, as so many things can go amiss. DO NOT use tap water. Tap water contains chemicals that can leave spots on the glass and spoil blossoms. Bottled water is good, but not a gallon. Bring a couple of medium-sized bottles of water and store these until needed. Tepid, room temperature water is by far the best. If it is too warm, it will loosen the glue and the design may float to the top. If it is too cold, it might cause the container to sweat, blurring the design for viewing.

Background Cloth

If a background is permitted per exhibit or show schedule, find a soft color in blue, aqua, or green to highlight the water color from below the surface. The cloth can be attached to the niche (provided) with straight pins or tape before putting in the container and draped to imply movement of currents.

On the night before the exhibits open, take the cloth and pin it into the niche. If the container is going to be too low, add a block of wood or box under the cloth to give it height. Sometimes the blocks are provided. Ask early. If in an African violet show, leave the show tag at your assigned niche with the background so it will be known by everyone that you have an entry ready except for placing your container and adding water.

Almost to the Finish Line

Now comes the demanding part of underwater designs. Concentrate on what you are doing. Stay relaxed and take your time. Right before the exhibit or show starts, you will be allowed to put the finishing touches to your underwater creation.

Heat up your glue gun. Take the design *without the violet*, and lay the blossoms at the spot that will show off the flower at its best. Dribble some glue over the center of the stems only, to allow the stem ends to continue to take in water. Add some more filler to the design to cover the mechanics. Let it cool.

Start pouring water down the side of the glass. Add sand or gravel *only on the bottom inside*, then add more water. When $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water, take your tiny design, now with the violet added, and nestle it in place at the center of the sand or gravel a little bit closer to the back side of the glass. Adjust it carefully.

If you have a small accessory, one that hints the show or exhibit theme, put it in now. The focal point of every design is the flowers, not the accessory.

Place the glass container with its design in place and fresh blossom included, on its reserved spot at the exhibit or show room. Slowly add more water until it is just below the top of the container. (Water evaporates quickly so fill it to the top; add as needed later.) Remove all floating debris. Carefully adjust sand or gravel so the base is completely hidden from view. Blot up water that might have dripped on the tablecloth.

Place your two data cards and the show tag, if needed, in front of the design. It's ready!

Note: Do not allow any part of your design materials to touch the sides of the container or rise above the water level.

Stand back and look at the design. It should look just stunning, especially if the overhead lights shine on it, making it sparkle. Underwater designs can be spectacular! A winner for sure!

From *The Dixie News*, Publication of the Dixie AVS

*Rob's
Combustible
Pigeon*

*Exhibited by:
Janet Scheaffer
Hybridized by:
R. Robinson
Semiminiature*



Photo Credit: Neil Lipson



*Primulina
wentsaii*

*Exhibited by:
Bill Price*

The Texas-Style Potting Method

By Heather Harkness

This watering method was devised by Jodi Davis, of Austin, Texas. She was searching for a better way to grow her violets. Using her knowledge of the natural habitat of many of the species, she adapted indoor cultivation of the African violets to more closely resemble natural conditions. In their natural environment, most species grow in a shallow layer of rich compost and other materials from the forest. Underneath there is often a rocky, gritty layer, into which the roots grow. Frequent rain washes down through the rocky layer, keeping the roots of the plants moist. For our purposes, a shallow layer of coarse, inert material, such as perlite, is put in the bottom of the pot and covered with a shallow layer of potting mix. This allows air spaces to be formed with the perlite initially absorbing some water, and the remainder taken up by capillary action.

I fill the pot with approximately one-third perlite and two-thirds potting mix. The plants are potted in the usual way, but the pot is then left standing in a saucer or shallow bowl filled with a weak fertilizer solution. However, the level of the water should not rise above the level of the perlite.

It is also recommended that a row of holes be drilled around the pot at the height of the top of the perlite layer. This not only gives an indication of how much water to put in the reservoir, but more importantly, allows air to reach the roots of the plant. While air spaces available in porous potting mix allow the exchange of carbon dioxide and oxygen, the extra air provided to the root system by the spaces in the perlite gives the plant a tremendous boost to its growth. Usually, the roots of the violets are, to a certain extent, in competition for water with the peat moss in the mix, and nutrients are sometimes unavailable to the plant because of the pH level of the soil.

The Texas-Style Method allows roots uninhibited access to the moisture and food in the perlite layer. Although the Texas-Style Method allows a fair tolerance of overwatering and under watering, please remember that African violets do not tolerate either swamp or desert conditions. The habit of weighing

the pot in your hand is still a valid way of determining whether the plant needs watering or not. If the pot is still heavy at the end of the watering period, it could mean that the root system is still immature and unable to use up the quota of water, the variety may have a naturally sparse root system (in this case use a smaller pot), the plant has a particularly dense and heavy root system (not common), or the roots have been so damaged by pests or disease that they are no longer healthy enough to take up the water.

In her book, *Growing to Show*, Pauline Bartholomew lists three methods of determining when to water plants with Texas Style Potting.

First, by DEMAND. Determine the need by gauging the weight of the pot, and the dryness of the top of the soil. This is a good method for those with only a few violets, as each plant needs to be checked daily.

Secondly, by VISUAL REPLACEMENT, which is a method devised by Kenneth Bowman. The plants have a 1 1/2 inch layer of perlite, the saucer is about two-inches larger than the diameter of the pot, and they are given about 1/4 inch of dilute fertilizer solution. When the 1/4 inch of solution is used up (determined by sight), add another 1/4 inch of solution. This is a good method for most hobbyists. The third method is by SCHEDULE, and is the preferred method for those growers managing a large collection. The schedule is largely dependent on pot type and weather, as well as by the plant that first needs watering. The rest get watered whether they need it or not. In this way, the watering requirements can be quite accurately predicted. For people with a large number of plants, this method has the advantage of cutting down the time and energy spent watering. The flexibility of the Texas-Style Potting Method also allows growers to take a holiday knowing that the watering requirements of their collection are taken care of.

From the *Newsletter* of the Early Morn AV Group, Inc., Australia

Designing In...



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Dollywood - Ruth Geoke



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- Karyn Cichocki



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Tennessee

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Grand Ole Opry - Karyn Cichocki



Memphis - Mel Grice



Nashville - B.J. Ohme



Mississippi - Paul Kroll

State Fair and African Violets

Q. HOW DO YOU GET NEW CLUB MEMBERS?
A. BY USING OPPORTUNITIES TO THE FULLEST!

By Kathleen "KAT" MacNeil • Lakes Area Violet Growers • Affiliate of the AV of

I worked at the State Fair Violet show for the first time. Wow, what fun! I will certainly do it again!

One of the women I worked with had a counter that we used on our shift. We averaged 500 people an hour, from 9am-9pm for two days. That's a lot of people going through a showroom. With more than 12,000 visitors, we had great opportunities for membership recruitment.

Here are some tips to make your next event a success:

Sell Yourself and the Club!

Be approachable. SMILE, and openly greet visitors. Have eye contact when talking to folks. By pairing a shy member with a talkative one, you have a winning team.

Have *something* to hand out to everyone. It can be as small as 1/8 of a piece of computer paper. Include web address, contact numbers, next show or sale dates. We had ours on purple paper. Many companies spend thousands to advertise at events like this. Yes, a lot get thrown away, but some are kept and used. That's what we're looking for.

Have *LOTS* of registration forms for membership. You will need many workable pens (on strings) and a money box for cash and checks. Be sure to give people paying by cash a receipt. Be sure you have some change for cash payments and a receipt book and stapler to attach checks to forms. A sign that says *cash or checks only* would also be helpful.

Let the Visitor Know You're There to Help Them!

Post information signs around your showroom. Things like growing tips and watering tips are important to observers. You'll be surprised at how many people read them. Most of the general public has seen or owned an African Violet at one time. But they think you have to be an *expert* to be a club member. You need to sell your club as an educational opportunity that's open to everyone.

Have a host of general information tips on *one piece* of paper to hand out at the educational table. Long necks, potting mix recipes, and leaf propagation seem to be the most asked questions. By having all the info on one sheet, you can save time and printing costs.

Be Prepared for Success!

Make sure your club's name, website, and contact numbers are on every piece of literature that goes out.

Have all working members wear something that designates them as the "violet people." For example: matching name badges, hats, scarves, visors, or T-shirts. Make your badges or hats colorful and easy to see. That will help the public find you, and your fellow workers find each other. When not on duty, remove your ID item.

Have men and women working at all times. A lot of gentlemen would be interested in growing if they knew they weren't the only guy.

Look alert and ready to help, especially if you are at the Membership or Educational tables. Keep eating, grooming, and excessive chatting away from the work area. *Remember, you are there to serve and are representing your club to the public.*

Take turns with your partner sitting and standing. Step out from behind the table. People will feel more comfortable asking you questions. Never contradict someone's advice in front of the public. There are many ways to raise violets. If a member has made an error, correct them in private.

Be very literal when showing problem plants and their solutions. When you show an example of a long neck, make it a LONG neck. I have a specific plant that I use for classes that has a neck about six inches long. That way, people really get the idea of what you are talking about. Showing problems and giving the remedy makes the new person realize that they are not the only one who has that issue, and again makes joining a club

more attractive.

Use simple words when explaining something. You already appear knowledgeable to the observer. There's no need to try to impress; folks are already dazzled by the gorgeous show plants.

DISPLAYS

The showroom we were in became home to Gladiolas several days later. It's 40 ft. ceilings and not-so-white walls were a challenge for decorating and display.

Here are some tips to help make your display a success.

Bright green seems to be the perfect color for table coverings and back drops. It doesn't compete with the plants. TALL backdrops work best in an area with such high ceilings. Think "color, texture, splashy, showy" for displays.

Appealing displays attract attention, and people come in and get interested in violets. A convention tip: *You have **three seconds** to grab your viewer's attention before they move on to the next thing.*

SECURITY

Sorry to say, but we do need to address security issues. Please use only first names on member's badges. Be sure you have permission from members to give out contact numbers. Web address and E-Mails are a much better idea when working with such a large public audience. Have volunteers working in pairs. Ladies, carry fanny packs or have a secured area for purses and other personal items. **Do NOT leave member directories anywhere.** (Having easy access to

names, addresses, and phone numbers of people who are working the show is an open invitation to trouble.) When someone joins the club (at the event), let them know their directory will be mailed.

If an unruly visitor shows up, *stand* and address them politely. Do not become confrontational. Have a hand signal designed ahead of time to alert other workers that you need help. This is one of the reasons it's great to have men in the club. Use a cell phone to call Fair or Mall Security. ***The security number should be posted at all work stations.*** If you have someone who is touching the plants or an unsupervised child, simply ask if you may help them and just follow them at a reasonable distance until they leave the show.

DEMOS

It slices, it dices..... People love demonstrations. Be sure you have someone who understands a little showmanship doing them. You may want to get a microphone. A demo done by a good speaker (with a sense of humor) is a great way to attract a crowd. Then you can follow the demo with club handouts and advertising.

There are a thousand other places that people could be. If they took time to walk through your show, it could be because they are interested in violets. That's your opportunity to show what you can offer them through your club. Shows, sales, and fairs are great times to reach out to your community and bring in new members.

Growing your club can be just as rewarding as growing your plants.

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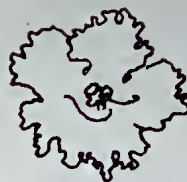
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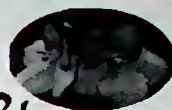
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For **CATALOG** in Adobe Acrobat Email cviolets@msn.com or send \$2.00 (refundable with order) to above address



OVER 500,000 PLASTIC POTS IN STOCK FROM 1-1/2" to 8"

Standard – Tub – Square White – Green – Terracotta

Oyama Planters – All Sizes and Colors

Dandy Pots

Swift's Moist Rites

Wick Water Reservoirs

Permanest Tray

3" and 6" Clear Domes

Labels 3"-4"-5"

Pesticides and many other products

Fertilizers

Dyna-Gro - Optimara - Peters - Shultz - Others

Growing Media

African Violet Mix and Wicking Mix

Vermiculite - Perlite - Peat Moss

Physan 20 - Phytan 27

Superthrive

Manufacturers of ELISA'S AFRICAN VIOLET SUPPORT RINGS & J F IND RINGS



The

Violet Barn

10-time winner, AVSA Best New Cultivar Award

Extensive online catalog at www.violetbarn.com

Looking for African violets? We have them!

- Hundreds of varieties, including our award-winning "Rob's" and "Ma's" varieties. Like 'Rob's Ditzzi Mitzi' at right.
- Many more of the latest varieties from Russia and Ukraine
- A large selection chimera varieties and Saintpaulia species

Want a good deal? 10 different varieties, seller's choice, for \$40*
...specify miniature, standard, or trailing.

Looking for 'other' gesneriads? We have them too!



We grow hundreds more of the 'violet relatives', including many of the latest like those shown here:

Episcia 'Jim's Specialty' (left)
Sinningia 'Kleopatra' (at right)

"Seller's choice" specials:

5 different episcias for \$20*
5 different kohleria for \$20*

You might want to try streptocarpus. We're famous for our 'Bristol's' hybrids. All are showy plants, easy growers and prolific bloomers, like 'Bristol's Night Light', one of our latest, shown at right

Our offer: 10 different streptocarpus, seller's choice, \$40*

We also have sinningia—everything from microminis to speciosa

Many, many, other genera of gesneriads listed on our online catalog. We have companion plants, like begonias and hoyas, too!

We are also THE source for miniature container and terrarium plants. These are truly miniature plants. See our extensive listing online. Our special: 10 different mini terrarium plants, seller's choice, \$40*



***Shipping:** April 15-October 31 via USPS priority mail. \$10 per order, then odd \$.80 per plant
We ship in winter too! By express mail only. Visit website for details and pricing.
We ship anywhere (internationally), anytime – safe delivery guaranteed!



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"like" us and receive all of the latest updates—new plants, growing tips, contests, and more!

Dr. Ralph (Rob) & Olive Ma Robinson
PO Box 9, Naples, NY 14512
Stay at the "Violet House" while visiting!

Phone: 585-374-8592 Fax: 585-374-6947
Open for visitors Tuesday thru Saturday, 12-5 pm
Phone orders Monday-Saturday 12-5 pm, Web-orders anytime

